

**ACPL ITEM
DISCARDED**

56
127
op. 1

PUBLIC LIBRARY
FORT WAYNE & ALLEN CO., IND.

ANNEX

296

Magnus

M27

cop. 1

282977

Jews in the Christian era ANNEX

PUBLIC LIBRARY

FORT WAYNE AND ALLEN COUNTY, IND.

ACPL ITEM
DISCARDED

ANNEX

SOUTH CIRCULATION STORAGE

4 Feb

16 Mar

THE JEWS IN THE CHRISTIAN ERA

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A DICTIONARY OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE.

“An application of scientific method to vast and scattered material. . . . The crux of the difficulty comes when the digested and assimilated mass has to be turned into the flesh and blood of a live book. This is the ultimate test by which the work is to be judged. Are there spaciousness of view and single-mindedness of aim that give a unity to the whole? So far as we have been able to judge, the book stands this severe test.”—*Nature*.

ENGLISH LITERATURE IN ITS FOREIGN RELATIONS: 1300-1800.

“Magnus is no mere chronicler of literary tendencies; he has an eye (as his former books show) for the larger social, economic, and philosophical movements which the deeper currents of poetry and drama often betray and always presuppose. . . . For all who take it up with some knowledge it provides a stimulating introduction, at once literary and in the best sense philosophical, to the literature of Western Europe.”—*The Year's Work in English Studies*.

A GENERAL SKETCH OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE IN THE CENTURIES OF ROMANCE.

“The other and the nobler way, of which Goldsmith and Hallam set the example, and which Mr. Laurie Magnus has followed, gives us something different from a ‘cram’ book or a book of reference. . . . To attempt this kind of conspectus is incomparably the more difficult task, and success in it seems to require the wide knowledge and power of generalization of a Lord Acton. Mr. Magnus . . . has performed a very arduous feat with a skill that, to one reader at least, has pleasantly recalled Viscount Bryce’s memorable description of Acton’s conversation.”—*Journal of Education*.

THE JEWS IN THE CHRISTIAN ERA

*From the First to the Eighteenth Century
and their Contribution to its Civilization*

by
LAURIE MAGNUS

LONDON
ERNEST BENN LIMITED



First Published in

1 9 2 9

Printed

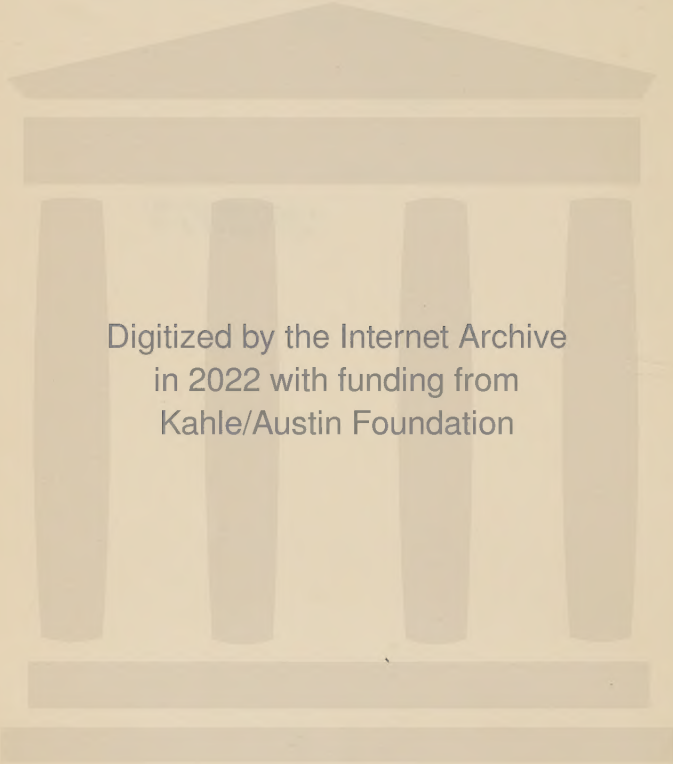
in

Great Britain

TO
THE CONFLUENCE OF INFLUENCES
AND THE HOPE OF UNION

282977

OCT 9 1935



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA	
§ 1. THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM - -	11
§ 2. THE AUTHORITIES - -	14
§ 3. JUDÆA AND ROME - -	18
§ 4. JEWISH PARTIES - -	31
§ 5. PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA - -	39
§ 6. JESUS AND THE PHARISEES - -	47
II. SCHOLASTIC JUDAISM	
§ 1. HILLEL - -	56
§ 2. THE DREAM OF A SHADE - -	60
§ 3. THE SETTLEMENT AT JABNE - -	68
§ 4. THE ORDEAL OF THE LAW - -	77
§ 5. THE COMFORT OF JERUSALEM - -	84
III. PURSUIT AND ESCAPE	
§ 1. THE RAVELLED THREADS - -	95
§ 2. EMPEROR, SAINT, AND PROPHET - -	102
§ 3. COMMERCIAL CONTACTS - -	113
§ 4. THE WAY OF ESCAPE - -	119
§ 5. SAADIAH - -	127
IV. DAWN OF THE SEPHARDIM	
§ 1. LOOKING BACKWARDS - -	136
§ 2. WITH THE FLOWING TIDE - -	146
§ 3. THE END OF A BEGINNING - -	158
V. THE SEPHARDIC LEGACY	
§ 1. CARRIERS OF HELLENISM - -	170
§ 2. AVICEBRON - -	179
§ 3. JEHUDAH HALEVI - -	187
§ 4. MAIMONIDES - -	201

CHAPTER

PAGE

VI. SILENT SEATS

§ 1. "SEPHARDIM" AND "ASHKENAZIM"	214
§ 2. A WANDERING SCHOLAR - -	219
§ 3. THE MARRANOS - -	229
§ 4. URIEL DA COSTA - -	241

VII. THE VALLEY OF ASHKENAZ

§ 1. THE LIGHT OF THE VALLEY -	249
§ 2. THE CABALA - -	254
§ 3. JEWISH MYSTICISM - -	267
§ 4. THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION -	280

VIII. TRANSITION

§ 1. SEQUEL TO THE REFORMATION -	292
§ 2. SUMMER AND WINTER IN ASHKENAZ	303
§ 3. HASSIDISM - - -	322

IX. SPINOZA - - - - 330

X. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

§ 1. RAVELLED THREADS - -	364
§ 2. FRANKFORT - -	369
§ 3. MOSES MENDELSSOHN - -	382
§ 4. EPILOGUE - -	394

NOTES

1. THE SACRED SILVER - -	403
2. RACE, LANGUAGE, NATION - -	404
3. THE WAILING WALL - -	408
4. 'ALENU - - -	409
5. COMMERCIAL JEALOUSY - -	411
6. THE BADGE - - -	413
7. "A FEW HEBREW SCHOLARS" -	416
8. FLEDGEBY AND RIAH - -	417
9. AN ETHICAL IDEAL - -	419
10. THE UNIVERSAL SWAY - -	420
11. THE RHINE COMMUNITIES - -	421
12. JEWISH RITUALS AND THEIR NATIONAL DESIGNATIONS - -	422
13. YIDDISH LITERATURE - -	424
INDEX - - - -	427

BY WAY OF PREFACE

My acknowledgements to superior authorities are duly recorded in footnotes, but I should like to add here how much I have enjoyed tracking dates and facts by the help of my mother, whose *Outlines of Jewish History*, first published in 1886, was revised for a fourth edition in the year of her death, 1924.

L. M.

October, 1929.

CHAPTER I

FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

§ I. THE HISTORICAL PROBLEM

THE most essential contributions to the Christian era were Jesus and the Hebrew Bible. Each of these was contributed by the Jews, and, if history could be dictated before it is read, it would seem that the people who made such important contributions, outweighing in man-power and material the Christian inheritance both from Greece and Rome, should have shared lavishly in the fruits of the civilization which they helped to sow. An historian-dictator would say: "I am inaugurating a new era in human annals. I shall date the year 1 from this event. I am drawing my chief literature from Judæa, and my leaders from the tillers of that soil. These will come 'not to destroy, but to fulfil Jewish Law, for no jot or tittle of that Law shall in any wise pass away till all be fulfilled.' " Therefore—would he not have added, our imaginary dictator of human history, in the plenitude of his grace and power: "Therefore, I ordain that the race of

those leaders and the people of that Book shall be exalted in the new era, to which, indispensably, they bring gifts"? And the historian-reader has to learn that the Jewish contribution was employed to the fullest extent, that Christianity was founded on the Hebrew Bible, as not destroyed, but fulfilled, by Jewish teachers, but that, year after year, and century by century, reckoned *ab anno Domini*, the Jews sank further and further back from the eminence reached by their gifts; that their genius was wasted in dispersal and consequent under-productiveness; and that, scattered into minorities, and subject frequently to pitiless persecution, their share in the fruits has been incommensurate with their tribute as sowers.

True, they rejected Jesus. They refused his fulfilment of their Law. They would neither destroy nor fulfil, but, holding tenaciously what they had heard, they let go all that he said unto them. In this rejection, or refusal, or heroic obduracy, the historian-dictator may seek a means of conciliating the reader of history. He may say: "All would have happened according to expectation and plan, if the Jews, very inopportunately, had not dashed the ripening fruit from their lips. Jesus was of them, the Hebrew Bible was theirs, and out of Jesus and the Hebrew Bible grew the fabric of Christianity and a civilization designed for the new era. But the Jews stood apart. They would not grow with the

growing fabric. By causing Jesus to be crucified, they entered the Christian era under the shadow of the Cross." Yet the curious unexpectedness of Jewish history supplies two partial replies to an explanation inadequate to the event. First, dislike of the Jews is manifest earlier than the first century : it was a pagan before it was a Christian sentiment, and was not caused by the Crucifixion. Secondly, though the triumph of Jewish genius did not exalt the Jews among the nations, they were neither degraded in the spirit nor destroyed in the body. Through eighteen centuries of major and minor suffering, in the course of which they developed strange powers of endurance and consolation, they not merely survived an ordeal unmatched in collective experience, but they were found repeatedly, even constantly, equal and even superior to the record of their own past. They neither mumbled their memories nor fumbled their sacred things. They dug themselves into the memories, and kept the sacred things undimmed, so that, whenever occasion arose for the Christian to come to the Jew, bidding him bring forth his witnesses, the evidence was available, unshaken in testimony and unruined by neglect. Beyond the accumulated rubble of exceptional legislation, social ostracism, and prohibited occupations, behind a thick layer of qualities, which modern psychoanalysis might trace to the canker of inferiority-complex, the

sun shone on the towers of Jerusalem, and its reflection illumined the Jewish life, familiar, cheerful, and wholesomely sane, which made a brightness even in the ghettos underneath the shadow of the Cross. Thus, assuming both propositions, and leaving the occasions till they occur, the reader of history cannot accept the excuse offered by its baulked dictator. Somehow, the promised reward to the contributors of Jesus and the Old Testament was spilt out of the portion of the Jews ; yet, somehow, their denial of Christianity was not the prime cause of their disabilities, and exclusion from civil life did not maim their spiritual strength. It is to the *how* of these facts, so contrary to expectation, so far from ideal, and so unique in their incidence, that the actual historian must address himself.

§ 2. THE AUTHORITIES.

The last century B.C. and the first century A.D., in which the Christian era was founded, still hide many of their secrets. The best-qualified ancient authority is Josephus, the Romanized Jew, who added the Imperial name of Flavius to his own. He lived from A.D. 37 to after 100, and wrote from direct knowledge a history of the *Jewish War* and a volume of *Jewish Antiquities* (archæology), as well as several lesser works. In both his major books, however, he hardly mentions the

name of Jesus, and the single brief passage of testimony, in Book XVIII. of the *Antiquities*, is of doubtful authenticity.* We must be content to quote the disputed words :

“ Now about this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed he should be called a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure ; and he won over to himself many Jews and many also of the Greek nation. *He was the Christ.* And when Pilate, at the instance of the principal men among us, had sentenced him to the cross, yet did not those who had loved him at the first cease (to do so) ; for he appeared to them alive again on the third day, as the divine prophets had declared—these and ten thousand other wonderful things—concerning him. And even now the race† of Christians, so named after him, is not extinct.”

Except for the glory of Josephus, who was not backward in pursuing it, it does not much matter

* Drs. F. C. Burkitt, A. Harnack, and F. St. John Thackeray are disposed to think that Josephus wrote it, with the possible exception of the four words which we print in italics. Drs. E. Schürer, H. Graetz, and S. M. Dubnow are disposed to deny its authorship by Josephus. Drs. Th. Reinach and J. Klausner think that it was inserted, in whole or in part, by an apologist for Christianity, who has been identified conjecturally with Eusebius himself. It is found in all the extant MSS. of Josephus, but none of these is earlier than the tenth century.

† φῶλον, tribe: an odd word, perhaps, for a Christian apologist to use of his brethren in faith.

if he himself wrote this "testimony" in the first century, or if it was written into his narrative in or before the fourth, when Eusebius quoted it as genuine. The point is, that even the exactest scholars select only four words, as indisputably due to an interpolator. The rest of the paragraph is defensible as an account which Josephus might have written of such men, Greeks as well as Jews, who received the truth with pleasure from the teachings of a wise man, with something heroic, even legendary, in his record ("if indeed he should be called a man"), and who did not cease to love him even after he had been condemned to crucifixion. "This was the Christ" (whether Josephus said it or another), about whom ten thousand wonderful things had been alleged in his lifetime and after. But it is a scanty and unique testimony.

The Rabbinical authorities, who are rather discursive than authoritative in their approach to historical data, are contained in the Jerusalem Talmud, which attained its present shape in the fourth century A.D., and the Babylonian Talmud in the fifth. These unwieldy and amorphous treatises comprise (1) the earlier (Hebrew) *Mishna*, a codification of the Oral Law, based on the labours of *Tannaim* (commentators of the first and second centuries), and arranged under subject-headings in sixty-three tractates; (2) the later (Aramaic) *Gemara*, or disputations, etc.,

introduced around the *Mishna* by *Amoraim* (commentators of the third to fifth centuries). The greatest of the earlier *Tannaim* was Hillel of Babylonia (*c.* 75 B.C. to A.D. 5), and his writings and those of other Jews, including Philo of Alexandria (*c.* 20 B.C. to A.D. 45), likewise coeval with Jesus, and the Jewish Apocalypses, afford an invaluable increment to such acquaintance with the times as we derive from the Synoptic Gospels. In all these sources of information, the lack of a memoir-element is remarkable. Contemporary annals in Rome commanded the services of orators, historians and poets, as eminent as Cicero, Tacitus, Livy, Plutarch, Pliny, Virgil, Ovid, Juvenal, and more; and Dr. Reinach has dragged into a net the few *Textes relatifs au Judaïsme* which these Greek and Latin authors deemed worth writing. But the background of the Jewish War, which caused Vespasian in A.D. 70 to strike coins bearing the inscription, *Judæa devicta*, *Judæa capta*,* and to consider, though he rejected, the assumption of the title *Judaicus*, has to be reconstructed by historians out of sparse and insufficient references; and the size of their bibliography is a partial measure of what we miss. The moral issues of the Roman victory; the conflict of die-

* A *sestertius* of Vespasian in the British Museum has, on the reverse, within the legend *Judea Capta*, a Jewess seated, mourning, under a palm-tree, and Vespasian standing behind her, holding a spear and *parazonium*.

hards and defeatists ; the hardly separable threads of politics and religion, which were tangled in confusion in that epoch ; the Church which was to lift the name of Rome out of the ruins of the Empire which had stamped upon that Church's pregnant mother—all this “ awful rose of dawn ” is wrapped in a silence which modern voices break but cannot fill. If we could pierce the veil, says one such writer, we should acquire a key which would solve the deepest problems not merely of Jewish but of general history. But this boon is not vouchsafed. Imagination has to mend the gaps of knowledge, and history becomes so far not an exact science that the constitution of morning shadows is determined by an analysis of the noonday rays.

§ 3. JUDÆA AND ROME.

Rome may be described as the natural enemy of Judæa. The *superbia*, or stiff-neckedness, which Virgil, interpreting empire to Augustus, deemed it Rome's appointed mission to strike down, was precisely the quality which Jehovah rebuked in the Jews. Moreover, in the eyes of their Roman enemy, their vice had no redeeming features. They did not paint pictures, or cast statues, or excel in oratory or literature. *Alii*, others—the despised Greeks—as Virgil said, might claim this or that superiority, and still his Romans need not

care ; and Horace, enlarging on the theme, bore witness a few years later that captive Greece had captured her conqueror and introduced fine arts into rustic Italy. But no such claim could be advanced for the conquered Jew. He stuck in his pride beyond excuse, and the Judæa captured by Vespasian was captive all along the line. Though the legacies of Israel and Greece have been equated with Rome's in the present century,* yet the Roman saw nothing in the Jew to cause him either to spare the fallen (*parcere subjectis*), or, still less, to raise him from the ground for gentle offices of leadership in peace. It was a case of *væ victis* beyond appeal. In no known capacity of peace or war would Rome yield precedence to her Jewish victims. They were always to be crushed, while she fulfilled her destiny of Empire. It is a state of mind not unknown to Imperial peoples. Drake held the Spanish underdog in mean esteem, and Nelson bequeathed to the nineteenth century a long hate of conquered France. So much so, that a Victorian critic† could declare in 1895 that "the ingratitude of Europe to France" was the worst in the history of humanity. His impulse was generous, but his history was defective. The ingratitude of Rome to Judæa was more complete in its day, and entailed more permanent consequences.

* In the Oxford volumes under those names.

† Stopford A. Brooke.

For Judæa, like *Græcia capta*, or like France in defeat, possessed resources serviceable to mankind. We may seek the evidence from Virgil himself, the official laureate of the Roman Empire. Though his works supply Dr. Reinach with no *textes relatifs au Judaïsme*, yet in one poem of wide influence he was deeply indebted to Jewish teaching. The Fourth Eclogue, famous for its "Messianism," is seamed with Hebrew thought, and reveals in its vision of the future, as Pope saw long ago, scores of verbal parallels with Isaiah. The conducting medium were the Sibylline books, which came to Rome with her spoils from the East, and the contact of West and East was one of mind as well as frontiers. Two mighty forces of civilization, represented by Virgil and Isaiah, held in suspense by that sudden fusion the mutual enmity of Roman and Jew, then rushing to the destruction of the latter. Judæa, so soon to be crushed, was victorious Judæa in that hour, when Virgil, however unwitting, consulted Jewish seers for a Roman peace. So Milton, in a later day, soared to Sinai as well as Olympus. But the hour passed, unnotched and unnoted. Ancient critics of the Fourth Eclogue were more concerned to identify its "divine child" with the daughter of Octavian or another, than to trace to a Hebrew fount the music and mystery of the poem, and when Christian critics took up the tale, Judæa had been robbed of her Roman victory. Saints

and poets, like Augustine and Dante, have acknowledged the spell of the Fourth Eclogue, while ignoring the rock from which it was hewn. The historical error is a common one. It arises when the historian fails to place himself, by an effort of reconstruction, in the mind of the epoch of which he writes. He is tempted to push out into the future, without observing the limits of space and time, and it will enhance, rather than diminish, the value of Virgil's poem if we keep strictly to the mind of Rome in 40-38 B.C. Then that Eclogue will appear in correct perspective as an expression, solitary but clear, of the civilizing genius of the Jews. It was a Hebrew dream from which Virgil awoke to fit his song to a major theme, and, exchanging *pascua* for *duces*, to extract pity from piety and courtesy from courage. It was as much—or more—a Hebrew dream, as that of the *Roman de la Rose* was French, or as it was to a French book that Malory went for Arthur. But whereas France, even in defeat, was accorded the meed of her victories, Judæa was denied it. Her resources serviceable for mankind were utilized, but credited to another; and if, in the might-have-been of history, Virgil had known what he was borrowing and had acknowledged the debt, substituting the name of Isaiah for his reference to a "Cumean hymn," there might have been a moment's pause in the serial triumph of Vespasian, corresponding to

that momentary suspense of the muse of Octavian's epic poet. But the conqueror kept his joy-feasts of Jews to the lions ; he stocked his slave-marts with Jewish prisoners, and he caused a scroll of the Law from the Temple in Jerusalem to be carried in procession to the Roman Capitol. Virgil had been dead ninety years, but history plays with the fancy of his presence in A.D. 71 at the top of the Capitoline Hill, and of the salute with which he might have greeted the captured symbol. So Shakespeare would have saluted Cervantes, on tranquil heights above the smoke of the Armada. For, beyond the hotly disputed barriers of nation and creed, is the unity of the spirit of man.

Meanwhile, what did the Roman make of the Jew, in the actual clash of circumstances and ambitions ? We omit from this review the obscenities and trivialities of the satiric poets, though it is important to observe that the Jew was a butt of social prejudice—he was the outsider from common life—in pagan as well as Christian times : Christian peoples inherited the prejudice which the Jews' rejection of Jesus enhanced. Our present business is not with these evidences of the early unsociableness of the Jew, save to note their historical significance, and to add that it was as a religious unit, as something standing out separately by rites and beliefs, that the Jews were suspect and strange. We are

concerned with a more serious tradition of anti-Jewish bias. It comes to acute expression in the Histories of Tacitus, which were published about A.D. 105, and which represent Roman opinion in the first century. There he speaks of the power of the Jews, and of the contrast between their loyalty and benevolence to one another and their inveterate hate towards the rest of the world (*adversus omnes alios hostile odium*). He marks their separateness in food, and their refusal to marry out of their own creed, and adds that those who adopt their practices are taught from the first to despise their own gods, abjure their country, and hold in contempt their parents, children and brethren. This insistence on the loss of Roman virtue by converts to Judaism is an indication of the spread of Jewish proselytism in the Empire. Tacitus ascribes to Jewish belief in immortality their desire for children and contempt for death (*generandi amor et moriendi contemptus*), which meant that their population increased rapidly, and that they were obstinate in opposition; he notes their abstention from graven images, and that their Deity is supreme, eternal, and neither imitable nor perishable: kings and Cæsars are denied these honours (*non regibus hæc adulatio, non Cæsaribus honor*), he adds—again, a remark which carried a poisoned sting.

Seneca, who, as philosopher and playwright, exercised a notable influence on later European

thought, condemned the Jewish Sabbath as a waste of a seventh of their life; he deplored that this execrable race (*gens sceleratissima*) had so far penetrated into all the corners of the earth that the conquered gave laws to the conquerors (*victi victoribus leges dederunt*): a fresh indication of the dread of Jewish proselytism. So Valerius Maximus, about A.D. 30, spoke somewhat confusedly of Jews who had sought to corrupt good Roman customs by their (Phrygian) cult of Jupiter Sabazius, and Dion Cassius, writing in Greek about two hundred years later, remarked that the Jewish race was known even among the Romans to be distinct from the rest of mankind "by their whole way of life, so to speak, but particularly because they do not honour any of the other gods, but worship some one Deity only with great fervour. There is no image of him even in Jerusalem, but they regard him as ineffable and invisible."

Lastly, in our present context, we come to Cicero's famous speech delivered in 59 B.C., in defence of Valerius Flaccus, the Proconsul, who was charged with intercepting monies which the Jews of Asia Minor, in common with other congregations in the Diaspora,* contributed to the Temple in Jerusalem. The suit had brought Jews into the Court-house, and Cicero spoke in

* Diaspora=countries of dispersion, territories of exile; the Jews outside Palestine. For the sacred money see Note 1.

low tones, so as only to be heard by the judges, and not to invite counter-cries. Remembering that this was the period of the first contact between Rome (under Pompey) and Judæa, Cicero's conservative anti-Judaism is of particular interest. He expresses the opinion that "to resist this barbaric superstition is an office of sternness; to bring into contempt a crowd of Jews who are frequently disturbers of our councils is a mark of the highest consideration for the interests of the Republic." The prosecution might urge that Pompey, when he captured Jerusalem, had left its sacred things intact. But surely herein he acted with his accustomed prudence, "since he gave no handle for calumny (*sermoni obtreclatorum*) in a suspicious and slanderous (*maledica*) city. It was not the religion of Jews and enemies, but his own sense of decency, which actuated that eminent commander." For Judaism was outside the pale of respect: "Every State has its own religion; we have ours. But even when Jerusalem was unconquered, and the Jews kept the peace, nevertheless their kind of religion was a scandal (*abhorrebat*) to the splendour of our realm, the dignity of our name, and the institutions of our fathers; and today," concluded Cicero, "it is much more so, now that this tribe (*gens*) has demonstrated in arms what its sentiment is towards our Empire. How dear it was to the immortal gods is demonstrated by its defeat,

its dispersion, its enslavement.” And in another place Cicero spoke of the Jews as a nation born to be slaves.

This brief summary of evidence should lead to some positive conclusions. Certainly, its value does not reside, as certain Jewish apologists have seemed to think, in the opportunity of refuting it. It is quite easy to say that the Jews were not born for slavery, that they are not an execrable race, that they do not corrupt good morals, that they do not hate their fellow-men, and so on. The mere negation of the testimony neither vindicates the Jews nor explains the Roman view. We have to look further and to dig deeper, if we are to read history intelligently. Above all, we have to live ourselves back into the times of which we are reading.

It was a time of progressive Imperialism, when the City State was reaching out to new conquests in distant climes, and was imposing a Roman peace on peoples outside the law. Virgil stated the objective in his memorable words :

Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento
(Hæ tibi erunt artes), pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

Historical parallels warn us that a growing tendency of such Imperialism is to insist on the principle that Might is Right, and that the possessor of Might is invested with a kind of Divine Right. Even Virgil—and here we are

thinking more particularly of the moral law of righteousness in his Fourth Eclogue—did not refuse divine honours to mortal rulers, and was hardly aware of a distinction between such adulatory ascriptions and the apocalyptic visions of the Sibylline books founded on Hebrew prophecy. On the other side were the *subjecti*, who were to be spared, and the *superbi*, who resisted subjection, and who were accordingly to be crushed, and, generally, the smaller peoples on whom Rome was to practise her sole art of imperial rule. We are concerned here with only one such people—a peculiar people in many respects, as tenacious of Right as the Romans, though not basing it on military Might, yet surprisingly good soldiers, and competent to oppose aggression into the last ditch. It was not otherwise a united but a scattered people. The causes of the Diaspora, or Dispersion, by early migration and deportation, lie outside our present survey, but the Roman found the Jew in various parts of his expanding Empire, not so much as a colonizing people, still less as a governing people—not like himself, nor as a rival to himself: either of these he could have understood—but rather as a series of odd deposits of an alien nation: bunches of strangers troublesome to place in the complex of common life. They were entitled to, or were not clearly disqualified from, a measure of equal treatment; less so—this was human nature as

well as civil ethic—after than before Pompey had taken Jerusalem, yet still, in no centre of their settlement, liable to summary treatment by expulsion or otherwise. But they never received the welcome which they never asked for. Moreover, respect for their institutions was imperceptibly undermined by the spectacle of captives of their nation sold as slaves in the Roman markets. Little things increased that disrespect; the slaves were circumcised, for example, and some of Martial's epigrams, which we refrain from quoting, tended to bring this rite into ridicule, and the ridicule reacted on the proselytes whose first necessary act was to comply with it.* It was disagreeable, too, to conservative statesmen, like Cicero, and to cautious Imperialists like Octavian, that these parcels of Jews in the Diaspora, with their proselytizing zeal, were tainted with Oriental habits, which recommended them to certain circles in an expansive age. Women, sometimes in high society, were particularly prone to the attraction of debased practices, which mingled Hellenism, Judaism, Pythagoreanism, Isis-worship, and the rest, in a kind of orgy of religiosity. Queer churches always find congregations, and elements of the exotic and bizarre are not without their emotional lure. To the Romans, who went to war with Cleopatra and the Easternizers, such

* The Emperor Hadrian included circumcision in the legal crime of self-mutilation. See Ch. II., § 4, below.

cults were as undesirable as they were queer, and a species of political disquietude was added by the close contact between Jews in the Diaspora and their headquarters in Jerusalem. At the same time, as soon as Judaism, even in a meretricious guise, obtained a footing among the Gentiles, its family life and Sabbath ease, and the mystery of its one Deity, found in places a not unsympathetic reception. But it was Christianity which reaped the soul-harvest of Hellenized Judaism.

From these few and imperfect impressions of a state of things widely distributed and inevitably diverse, it is possible now to go back to the evidences of the Latin writers. We see more clearly the signs, partly of fear partly of contempt, which each author in turn seems impelled to rehearse. The car of Rome went rolling on, fulfilling its destiny of empire, and again and again it encountered that ubiquitous, exiguous nation, which never knew when it was crushed. Pompey, Vespasian, and Hadrian's generals had all invaded Palestine, and brought back their Jewish prisoners. But the Jews were not like other nations; the capture of their city and "gods" did not destroy either their unity or their beliefs. They seemed to pass out of a nation into a religion, and to step through the yoke of a conquered people into the crown of a conquering creed. *Nati servituti* (born to slavery), said Cicero; *viâti victoribus leges dederunt* (the victims gave laws to their victors),

declared Seneca. With no image of their Deity even in Jerusalem, they refused divine honours to the Emperor, and Tacitus indicates by this characteristic contrast the possible failure of the Jews to "render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's," and the political consequences of such a failure. For what is abundantly clear is the constant search of a pretext by the Romans to proceed against the outlying parcels of Jews as energetically as against their capital city. There was no question then of religious persecution ; that came later with the Roman Church. There was no oppression by Jewish usurers ; that came later with the Christian evasion of Canon Law. It was a question of national Roman pride, which saw little groups of a beaten people enjoying not merely local autonomy, with the privileges suited to its customs, but penetrating good Roman virtue with manners which Jupiter did not understand and which Cæsar disapproved. And the worst of it was, that this wretched race, with its superstitions, idiosyncrasies and exclusiveness, was making converts in high and low places, partly by its sacramental ritual and partly by its moral code. The first object was to put them in the wrong, and at the back of the Roman system of administration in Judæa and the Diaspora there will be found the expression of this policy. Pontius Pilate exemplified it, among others.

§ 4. JEWISH PARTIES.

The Jews of Palestine played into the hands of their destroyers. It is hard to imagine a nation rushing more blindly on self-destruction than this exception among the nations in the first centuries before and after Jesus. Take France after 1871. The conquering Prussian had taken Paris, after an obstinate siege, and had carried to Berlin some of the valuables as spoils. He exacted a huge war-indemnity, and consolidated his triumph by adopting the imperial title which the Emperor of the French had to lay down. But France rose from her fall, and her chief ally in victory was the nation which had fought and beaten the first Emperor of the French. Judæa, as impatient of defeat and as tenacious in hate as France, conciliated no foes and made no recovery. Take Spain, still a puissant people between the mountains and the sea. Her decline from a loftier eminence was not an end, but a new beginning. There was no new beginning for the Jews. They alienated Rome, who might have spared them. They rejected Jesus, who might have saved them, and, within their own divided ranks, they confounded politics with religion, and did not always know their friends from their foes.

Was Judaism as a way of life, or were Jews, as a nation, to survive the conflict with Rome? If the answer was "Judaism as a way of life,"

should the way of life be for Jews or for all mankind? And if the answer was "for Jews," how did such champions distinguish their aim from that of the nationalists? These, very roughly, are the parties into which Jews now began to be grouped. The diehard nationalists were the Zealots; the Judaism for the Jews were the Pharisees; the Judaism for secular objects were the Sadducees and their Hellenizing allies.*

After all, the grouping was natural in the circumstances of the conflict. Judæa had put up a losing fight, and defeatist counsels were inevitable. We may recall, out of our own experience, how the Allies in the Great War were engaged, in the view of an elder statesman, in a losing fight in November, 1917, or a fight in which, if continued to the bitter end, they had more to lose than to gain. Our original war aims had become unattainable; security was our present need; and a solemn pact of arbitration might ensure it, ran his counsel to his fellow-countrymen. But Clemenceau, replying for France, declared that we were "fighting for victory," and other British statesmen described the elder statesman's

* The Essenes, a little sect of extreme Pharisees, tending to religious monasticism, numbered now only about 4,000 souls. Subtracting these classes, or parties, from the population of Palestine, we are left with a residuum which is not classified. They were known as *'Am ha-Aretz*, men of the soil, the rural, not the urban, mass. Whatever their rank on the land, they degenerated into an ignorant peasantry: the churls of the Hebrew vocabulary.

pacifist manifesto as no less than a "national calamity." A generation far enough from this episode to review it objectively may employ it to measure the clash of opinions in the old Jewish War. There the tension was more severe. Rome, the enemy, was finally invincible, though the military prowess of the Jews, which is one of the surprises of their history, still cried, "We are fighting for victory." But the real disintegrating factor was the ambiguity of the national aim. Nothing exactly corresponded to this condition in England in 1917. Probably some people thought that a solvent "Little England" might be of more use to the world than an integral but bankrupt Empire. But the clash of ideals was far sharper in Judæa, where the defeatists themselves were imperialists in another kind. The alternative to military victory was not limited to defeat in arms and the loss of all that a nation holds dear; Judaism visualized another and even an honourable alternative. The Jewish national ideal, as revised by Nehemiah and Ezra in the fifth century B.C., was conceived on religious much more than on political lines. Ezra, who is properly termed the second founder, after Moses, of Judaism, "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." Every word in this verse (Ezra vii. 10) is significant. The Hebrew word for "the law" is *Torah*, which is

imperfectly translated by that term ; the Hebrew for “ teach ” is derived from the same root as Talmud ; and with Ezra, “ the scribe,” *Torah* and Talmud first entered into their centuries-long primacy in Israel, substituting the victories of religion for the spectacle of a nation in defeat. Further, the words “ and to do it ” express the search for *doing* above *being*, which has always governed Jewish practice, and which distinguished it irreconcilably from Christian doctrine.

It is not within the scope of this essay to examine Ezra’s reforms, sweeping and drastic in their kind. Probably, even certainly, they were the only kind which could preserve Israel from new experience of Exile, or, rather, from relapsing into such “ sin ” as had led to that fate. What Ezekiel sowed, Ezra reaped, and stored in the Hebrew barns, and there the harvest was kept year after year and century after century. The word of the Lord came to Ezekiel, among the captives, and spoke of the trespass of Israel, how “ they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity, that the house of Israel may no more go astray, neither be polluted any more, but that they may be my people, and I may be their God ” (xiv. 10-11) ; and Ezra, in Jerusalem restored, stood up and said : “ ‘ Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now, therefore, make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure ;

and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.' Then all the congregation answered, and said with a loud voice, 'As thou hast said, so must we do'' (x. 10-12). We pass over some obvious reflections: the extreme character of Ezra's measures, hardly paralleled in the French Revolution or in the Russian Revolution of the present century, for founding a new social order on a violent severance with the old; and the evidence afforded by the strict decree for putting away foreign wives to the mixed descent of the Jewish race. We pass at once to the covenant sealed by Nehemiah and his contemporaries, in accordance with the letter of these reforms, "to walk in God's law (*Torah*), which was given by Moses, the servant of God, and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; and that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons; and if the people of the land bring ware, or any victuals, on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath or on the holy day. Also we made ordinances for us" to bring offerings, and fruits, and tithes, "for the service of the house of our God" (x. 29 ff.). We may compare this solemn and binding covenant with Luke xii. 38-40, and with the longer denunciation by Jesus of scribes and Pharisees, direct in descent from Ezra the scribe. Thus, in

Matthew xxiii. : "They say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders. They do all their works to be seen of men : for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the tassels. And they love the first places at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market-place, and to be called by man, Rabbi. . . . Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithe from mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightiest things of the Law, justice, mercy and faith. Blind guides, who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." We might compare, too, the injunction in Nehemiah as to the observance of the Sabbath with the word of Jesus to the Pharisees in the cornfields (Mark ii. 28) : "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." For we find that the direction to Judaism, given by Ezra in Judæa, after the calamity of the Exile, and as a sure shield against the repetition of its causes in the Jewish way of life, had led by the time of the war with Rome, with its shattering test for the Jewish nation, to an exceeding bitter cry in some quarters for a reversal of the direction. Authority is sought to strike away from the mere performance of the commands, or *Mitzvoth*,* to inde-

* *Mitzvah* (pl. *Mitzvoth*) was a commandment contained in *Halachah*, or the rules and precepts of the conduct of life, deduced for every relation and occasion from the study and oral interpretation of the *Torah* (law of Moses). The per-

pendent acts of "justice, mercy and faith," enjoined, indeed, by the Jewish rule of life (*Halachah*), but not always and punctually dischargeable as occasion might arise, owing to a ritual objection. So, in a sense, "they said and did not." More exactly, they "said" for all occasions, but "did" on such occasions only as were not forbidden to strict observers of the ritual law. Thus, Matthew and Paul had no doubt marked that this or that Pharisee used a pretext arising out of the occasion to evade specific performance of a weighty thing of the Law, and they may have extended the observation to *all* Pharisees on *all* occasions, whether a pretext was available or not. Here, however, we are not immediately concerned with the defence of Pharisæism in the first century. There *is* a defence, as there were faults, and the defenders are more necessary than the fault-finders, whose unmeasured and immoderate blame has loaded Judaism with unmerited disrepute. Our point is, not that Jesus or his disciples sought to make the deed greater than the rule, and to lift *Mitzvot* out of their matrix of regulation, thus ultimately reducing the constitutional authority of the written

formance of a *Mitzvah* was an act of joy, since it afforded the pious servant of *Torah* an opportunity of obedience and testimony to the will of God. There was also, of course, the joy of teachers in educating and enunciating the rules of *Halachah*. Elucidation of *Torah* for purposes other than conduct was distinguished as *Haggadah* (affirmation).

Torah—a difference between Pharisaic Judaism and Pauline Christianity which time has decided in favour of the latter—but that Judaism, in the epoch of the war with Rome, was likewise at war with itself, and that this internal dissension increased the awful ordeal of battle. Though the vast majority of fighting Jews were Pharisees, yet Pharisaism itself was a species of defeatism, as it contained the seeds of surrender, precisely because it was aware of its competence to re-arm the Jews with a new weapon of national reconstruction—not of the Hellenes nor of the Sadducees. The two Judaisms were each a present strength: Jesus and Saul were Jews before Jesus became the Christ or Saul became Paul, and these, representing many others, and bringing many more in their train, found a way of life out of Pharisaism. But there was also a second Jewish way. Ezra, in his time, and according to the needs of his time, had withdrawn his redeemed fellow-countrymen from contact with their neighbours. He had shown them a reformed way to the old goal of separation within the folk-right of the *Torah*, until, by the added labours of the scribes (*Sopherim*), all life became full and busy inside the enclosure of the Law, and the Talmud overspread the *Torah*. Thus, a little nation struggling to be free in the modern political sense, was at one and the same time a strict sect refusing release from the protective shelter of its own code, and finding, as the event

showed, compensation and satisfaction, and even empire, within that fence. The Jewish War was an impossible war. Everyone, or nearly everyone, had leanings to another (not necessarily, *the* other) side. Even Josephus, for example, its Jewish historian, who held an important command in Galilee in 66-67, and who was a Pharisee by training and instinct, was convinced in his soul of the unconquerableness of Rome, and held that his country had more to gain than to lose by linking her destiny with Rome's.

§ 5. PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA.

A signal instance of this dualism in Jewish thought is seen in Philo of Alexandria, Philo Judæus, as he is known, who lived from *c.* 20 B.C. to *c.* A.D. 45, thus covering in his lifetime the brief period of Jesus on earth. Philo may be described as a *philosophe* in the French sense in the seventeenth century, or as a German *Popular-philosoph* of the eighteenth; as not exactly a philosopher, but a philosophic popularizer of branches of knowledge most relevant to the needs of his own age. Living as a Jew in Alexandria, a leading city of the Diaspora, where the Greek Septuagint Bible had been written and was in common use, employing Greek as his native language and preaching in the synagogues in that tongue, Philo filled the chief need of his age

by seeking a reconciliation between the Hellenic and Hebraic ways of life. Once, in A.D. 38, he exchanged contemplation for action, and this act was a plain proof of his devotion to Judaism. He undertook, despite his advanced age and the interruption to his tranquil mode of living, to head a Jewish embassy to the Roman Emperor, Caligula, in order to secure the reversal of a hated order by the Roman Governor of Egypt, requiring that an effigy of the Emperor should be set up in Jewish synagogues. The order had been carried out with violence, and riots and bloodshed had ensued, with consequent penalties to the Jewish population. An embassy in the contrary sense was sent by the Greeks of Alexandria, with Apion at its head, and the particular interest of this is that the *Contra Apionem* of Josephus the historian, which took shape as a defence of Jewish customs, derived its title, though much less than its full contents, from this enemy of the race. Neither embassy met with much success, but Caligula's successor, Claudius, restored the privileges of the Jews, and Philo lived to reap the reward of his toilsome journey.

It is as a student, however, and an interpreter of Judaism to the Greeks and of Hellenism to the Jews, that Philo is memorable in history. But not in Jewish history. All the accounts agree that Philonism passed into the heritage of the world's thought through the Christian and not

through the Jewish gate, and the loss to Judaism, in a sense, is greater even than the loss of Jesus. For Jesus, by his own teaching, and more rapidly, by that of his disciples, was the founder of a religion not Jewish: Philo's extension of Judaism kept altogether within Jewish tradition. The extrusion of his books from the Jewish orbit, the lapse of his name from Jewish authorities, and the tacit surrender of him to the Gentiles, were due to the closing of Jewish ranks after the catastrophe of A.D. 70, to the refusal of external wisdom and even to the inhibition of an external language, and, summarily, to that fatal division of Jewish ideals, which led the redeemed of Ezra into the ghettos of the Middle Ages and left the fruits of Philo to be reaped by Church fathers and Gentile philosophers. Philo was as true a Jew as Ezra; Alexandria was as much a seat of Hebraism as Jerusalem, and, indeed, the Jews on the circumference in the Diaspora were nearer the centre of the world's thought than their co-religionists in Judæa. It is a part of the tragedy of the first century—a more “incredible” century than the fifteenth—that the confusion of war-aims and peace-aims, of resistance in arms and of reconciliation in thought, should have compelled the defeat of both parties, and their common extinction in Pharisaic schools.

We shall not discuss in detail the works by which Philo enriched the Hellenizing Judaism of his

times. By a transference of epithet we may properly describe him as a Humanist. His object was parallel to Petrarch's,* who, basing his reforms on the fact that pagan and Christian Rome were one city, sought to secularize learning, and to enlarge a cloister by worldly knowledge, with complete loyalty to each. That the Reformation would be unfolded from the Renaissance was hidden from Petrarch's eyes, but we may doubt if the knowledge would have held his hand from turning Cicero's manuscripts, or his foot from climbing the steep hills to the monasteries where he discovered them. Philo, too, made friends with the ancients. Just as Petrarch talked Cicero's Latin, so Philo talked Plato's Greek: his Bible, his prayer-book, his vernacular, were all in that tongue; and as Petrarch wrote "Familiar Letters" to his dead yet near compatriots, so Philo's *Lives of the Patriarchs* illustrated *agraphoi nomoi*, unwritten laws of conduct, and his treatment of Moses has been well compared with the *Cyropedia* of Xenophon. If he was not a philosopher *pur sang*, yet he constructed a philosophy of Judaism, in which the hard corners and awkward angles were melted by allegory and symbolism. By the extraction of deeper, hidden meanings, moralizing and beautifying the tale, he redressed his undiminished national heritage for cosmic and universal use. He did not lose what was

* Both wrote treatises *On the Contemplative Life*.

essential by the fusion. "Not in vast dreams of Man forgetting men," as a modern poet puts it, he sought to humanize the Law which he would not desecrate. Thus, he warned his readers, that, "because the Seventh Day teaches us symbolically of the power of the uncreated God and the tranquillity of his creation, we must not therefore abolish its ordinances so as to light a fire or till the ground on the Sabbath." Was not here a philosophic reply to the sophistic question of Jesus in the cornfields? Again: "Because the festivals are symbols of spiritual joy and our gratitude to God, we must not therefore give up the fixed assemblies at the proper seasons of the year. The allegorical or symbolic sense may be likened to the soul, the literal to the body. Just as we must have a care for the body as the house of the soul, so must we give heed to the letter of the written laws. It is only by the faithful observance of these that we can clearly recognize the inner meanings of which they are the symbols, and at the same time we shall escape the blame and accusation of the community." Would this philosopher-Pharisee have incurred the reproach of hypocrisy? We might refer, too, to the Stoic elements in Philo's system, or in his contribution to a system of thought; to his moral reasoning about the Biblical cosmogony, and his discovery of the true cosmopolite in the grave follower of the Hebrew way of life. It was all

well done, and permanently done, though it failed, not by Philo's fault, to add permanent honour to the Jewish name; and in the age in which it was done, it could not have been done otherwise. For the Jewish world, semi-consciously in the Diaspora, and with tragic lack of consciousness in Jerusalem, was aching for the revelation of a way of life which should harmonize, not science and faith, according to the need of the last and present centuries, but the Hellenism and Hebraism of its own day. Thus, to take an extreme example, it had to Hellenize circumcision itself by associating it with a moral meaning and transforming it into a symbol of spiritual hygiene. This argument, like some others, was not easy, and Philo seems in places to have drawn a line, the efficacy of which must be decided by the individual conscience, between public worship and private belief. It may be said that the application of this principle must have led to some insincere conformity; it may be said, too, that many Church-goers, and even some of their shepherds, would, in the last resort, fail by the same test. But these pragmatic questions are not relevant to the aim of the great liberal Jew, who must be revisited in his environment. He loved the God of Israel with all his heart and soul and might, but his love did not blind him as a guide through the surrounding Greek view of the universe. It has been well said by a Jewish

writer* that "Judaism, in Philo's idea, was not to be universal by ceasing to be national, or philosophical by ceasing to be legal." Yet Judaism, in Philo's view, *was* to be universal and philosophical, and the synthesis necessarily involved a certain amount of trimming and compromise, to which Allegory, even in its prime, was not always able to be stretched.

Years, nay, centuries later, when Petrarch's humanistic reforms had unsealed the fountains of pagan literature, and Johann Reuchlin, on his road from Italy, was adding Hebrew to Greek and Latin studies, the Platonic Academy at Florence welcomed to its sessions and symposia a youth, barely twenty years of age, who bore on his ingenuous countenance the stamp of scholarship, beauty, and breeding. Ficino, president of the Academy, and translator of Plato and Plotinus, greeted his arrival as a kind of advent, and Pico della Mirandola, as the youth was called, reigned in the councils of the Academy, with unabating brilliance and charm, till his death in 1494 in his thirty-first year. He initiated Hebrew studies in modern Europe. Pico's mystical aim, as practical as it was reverent in those days, was to find a formula of reconciliation between Hellenism and Hebraism, or between Plato and Christ. The Greek Moses, Plato had been called in the second

* Mr. Norman Bentwich, in *Aspects of the Hebrew Genius*. London, 1910; p. 19.

century A.D., and chief among the sources of this mystic lore, in which Pico was immersed, was Philo, the old Greek Jew, about whom the saying was current,—either Philo platonizes or Plato philonizes. Florence handed on to Cambridge this Christian- or neo-Platonism, derived, ultimately, from Alexandrine Judaism. The search for the synthesis is still unsatisfied. But its authors, except for certain references, which pure learning cannot deny, passed out of the ranks of the seekers. The Jews shut up their Greek books, which Petrarch reopened with so much pains, and disused their gracious Grecian speech. They shut out from their horizon the sun that had never set on Hellas, and, enlarging *Torah* by Talmud, multiplied learning without expanding space. Losing Philo, they lost the world, and the cosmic sense which Greece quickened in Christianity. At the very frontier of the Christian era, the Jews, indispensable for their gifts, progenitors of Philo and Jesus, and authors of utopian polities, to one of which we have alluded, and to others of which we shall come, relaxed their hold on Greek culture, and were beaten by Rome in arms. So, Philo, through many centuries, was only nominally Judæus.

§ 6. JESUS AND THE PHARISEES.

We shall come in the next chapter to Hillel, an older contemporary of Jesus and Philo, and to what, following Ezra, he counselled the Jews not to let go. Here we would close these impressions from the dawn of the Christian era—the red dawn of a bright day—by a brief commentary or excursus on Luke xviii. 9-14. The examination may help us to understand what lay behind the traditional attitude of Jesus to the Pharisees.

It is the passage which contains the parable spoken “to some who were self-confident that they were righteous, and despised others”; and the moral of the parable is: “Everyone that exalts himself shall be abased, and he that abases himself shall be exalted.” Of course, it means *real* self-exaltation and self-abasement; and to Jewish ears, accustomed as they were to precepts of humility in the Psalter, the warning would not sound strange, whatever its effect on the particular audience of the “self-confident,” to whom we are told that it was addressed. The words are relevant to our present context because a Pharisee was the villain of the piece. The following contrast is drawn: “Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee stood by himself” (*cf.* Matthew’s “chief seats in the synagogues”), “and prayed thus: ‘God, I thank thee, that I am

not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or also like this tax-collector. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I acquire.' But the tax-collector stood at a distance, and would not even lift up his eyes unto heaven, but kept smiting his breast, saying, 'God be gracious to me the sinner'"; and the tax-collector, we are told, because he was conscious of wrong-doing, was accounted nearer to God than the Pharisee.

The moral goes home. Humility is always admirable. It is recommended in the Hebrew prayer for "an humble and a contrite heart," which evoked the strains of Kipling's *Recessional*. But are there not occasions in a nation's experience when a more astringent appeal is requisite, and when it is more proper to recognize not one's own wrong-doing, but the duty of checking it in others? Perhaps the rabbi and the tax-collector had met in dispute before they went up to the Temple to pray, and were continuing, in however unfit a place, an old difference of opinion as to the kind of testimony demanded by the circumstances of the time. For, if we are fully to grasp the conflict between Philonists and Hillelites, we must go behind the signs of recrimination to the principles animating the two masters. It will not detract from the moral value conveyed by the parable of Luke, if we seek the background of the actual happening, and try to place it in the circumstances of Pharisaic Judaism at that time.

Such knowledge, if we can attain it, may lead us to believe that humility did not seem enough to save that fabric from disaster. Active right-doing, not a consciousness of sin, was perhaps the more sinewy policy. For the Pharisees were facing a triple loss. National independence, the protection of Rome, and the opportunity of Hellenic expansion, were all threatened at once; and the Pharisaic leaders, who still believed in the efficacy of Judaism to unite, to redeem, and to fructify what was left, had to repair those losses and to make them good. Some of them may have overplayed their part. They may have protested their right-doing too much, and have opened a front for attack. But, remembering their ordeal, we cannot think that *all* Pharisees, seeking thus to make good, and to hold up their heads before men, "exalting themselves," in other words, so as to fill their disciples with fresh courage, merited Matthew's reproach, that they "outwardly appeared righteous unto men, but within were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Appearances were against them, no doubt, or against some of them, at least, in the distracting counsels of the period, but both internal and external evidence forbid so terrible a generalization.

Internal evidence may be sought from sundry passages in Scripture. If we select one only of these, it is because it seems conclusive. The story

of the "greater commandment" is found in Mark xii. 28-34, in Luke x. 25-28, and in Matthew xxii. 34-40. There are certain variations in detail, but all three agree in the statement that the greatest commandment is contained in the familiar words of the Hebrew *Shemang*—the corner-stone in all ages of the Jewish religion: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. vi. 4-5). Second only in significance to the command to love the one God is the command to love our neighbour: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev. xix. 18); and no command, declared Jesus to the scribe, is greater than these two. Then, Mark tells us, the scribe said to Jesus, "Excellent, Master, thou hast said the truth," and Jesus replied to him, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." In Luke, the scribe is the announcer, and Jesus replies to him accordingly: "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." But we observe (1) that the scribe in this story, whether Jesus or he took the initiative in defining the commandments, or *mitzvoth*, is adjudged not far from the Kingdom of God, and a right-speaker, on promotion to a right-doer, because of his obedience to the *Torah*; and (2) that he is a man of the same class as the "blind guides" of Matthew xxiii. 16, who omitted, we are told, "the

weightiest things of the Law—justice, mercy, and faith.” It is reassuring to find this internal evidence to the long sight and true direction of the religion of the scribes and Pharisees.

True, both Luke and Matthew vary the story at one point. Both represent the scribe’s question as intended to “tempt” (or, as we might say, to catch out) Jesus. This hardly agrees with Mark’s conclusion to Jesus’s happy dismissal of his interlocutor: “Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God”; or even with Luke’s: “This do, and thou shalt live.” The former particularly may be accepted as proof of sympathy and kinship between Jesus and the Pharisees; and, as to the latter, from Maimonides to Mendelssohn, all authorities are at one in making “doing,” not “saying,” the foundation of Judaism. Moreover, even Matthew’s less friendly version quotes Jesus’s magnificent saying, “On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets,” and it is impossible to separate this saying from the teaching of Hillel, Jesus’s older contemporary, who formulated Judaism for the Pharisees, and sought to turn it into a religion fit for the heroes of the Roman war. The legend—a true one—is well known, how an unbeliever came to Hillel, and shrinking from the “heavy burden on his shoulders,” which the acceptance of Judaism would impose, asked for a short cut to the *Torah*. “Do not unto another,” replied

Hillel, "what you would not that he do to thee. This is the whole of the Law; the rest is commentary." The way of Jesus parted from that of Hillel, and Christianity followed the new way, leaving Judaism to follow Hillel. But the Gospels supply their own evidence of what Jesus took and gave out of Pharisaism.

Next, as to external evidence. We have to go for this to the history of the times. Pharisaism armed the Jews not only for resistance but for reconstruction. It had given them the Synagogue and the Psalter, and it sought to sustain its witnesses to the faith, not merely in the searching ordeal of war, slavery, and persecution, but in the longer and more corrosive experience of inferiority, submission and contempt. It built round them the wall of the Oral Law—a guide to daily conduct which was always being added to. The present writer happens to have seen what amounts to *Halachah* in the making. Rather more than a generation ago, when croquet and lawn-tennis were comparatively new games in country houses, it fell to a Jewish father of the old school to lay down the law as to which game, if either, might be played by his children on the Sabbath. He elucidated *Torah* in the sense that the proper observance of that day forbade the risk of breaking or chipping a wooden mallet or ball, and that the same risk did not attend the implements used at tennis. Accordingly, croquet was

prohibited and lawn-tennis was authorized. A legalistic religion? Yes and No. For beyond the decision on the legal point was the spirit of obedience to the Divine will, which, being universal in its obligation, must govern little things as well as great. This is the key to the "companionship" of the Pharisees, referred to in Ps. cxix. 63: "I am the companion (*chaber*) of all that fear thee and that keep thy precepts," and it is clear from the history of nineteen centuries that it possessed powers to sustain and to inspire, incomparably higher than might be inferred from its record in the antinomianism, for instance, of St. Paul.

It is in this dryer light, shed by history before and after the event, that the revolt against Pharisaism, crystallized emotionally in the Gospels, should be examined and supplemented. Thus, in connection with this parable from Luke, Christian commentators, we are reminded by a Jewish critic,* "all quote as a perfect parallel to the prayer of the Pharisee, and as a perfect justification for Jesus's story and saying," a passage from the Talmud, which recounts what a certain rabbi was wont to say when he quitted the House of Study. "I give thanks before thee, O Lord my God," ran his valediction, "that thou hast set my portion with those who sit in

* Dr. C. G. Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels*, London, 1927; vol. ii., p. 557.

the House of Study, and not with those who sit at street corners. For I and they rise early—I to words of *Torah*, but they to vain matters,” and so on, in tones of self-esteem. Plainly this rabbi was too smug. But was it all to the discredit of Pharisaism? Was there no public interest in it, too: badly expressed, no doubt, but still not altogether out of place? For note that a variant translation of “those who sit at street corners” is “those who frequent circuses and theatres.” The value of theatre-going has been differently appraised at different times: there was even a time, not three hundred years ago, when the theatres were shut, on the highest principles, in England; and some of the rabbis of the first century, which is a long way from the seventeenth, discouraged and even condemned the frequentation by Jews of the Greek theatre. It was the seat of the scornful, spoken of in Psalm i. Philo, on the other hand, in Alexandria, “apparently went to see performances of the great Greek dramas, as something permissible, nay profitable”; and “to draw the line,” as we hardly need reminding, “must often have been exceedingly difficult.”* This side-light from Alexandria seems to help our smug Talmudic rabbi. For, if the line was difficult to draw, and had to be drawn harder at one time than another, may not the variation have been due to circum-

* See *The Legacy of Israel*, p. 43.

stances which he could not overlook at the end of his day of toil? Even the Pharisee in Luke xviii., to come back to our starting-point, may have something on his side. He was as detestable, no doubt, as the tax-collector was admirable, but, after all, he lived in his own times, and knew the kind of testimony which they called for. The rabbinic leaven of Pharisaism should be judged by its positive contribution rather than by its reflection of self-esteem, and, haply, the virtue at which the Pharisee aimed exalted others besides himself, in an ordeal in which self-abasement might have led to the extinction of the virtue.

CHAPTER II

SCHOLASTIC JUDAISM

§ I. HILLEL.

CHRONOLOGICALLY, Hillel belongs to an older generation than Philo. He was born about 75 B.C., and died about A.D. 5, but historically he represents a force which built more securely for the future. Like Ezra, he came to Jerusalem from Babylon. Like Ezra, he exalted the *Torah* to primacy of place in the Jewish consciousness, and as the leading reformer of the Oral Law, he extended the lessons of *Torah* into precepts which should govern the whole of life. His reforms raised Pharisaic Judaism to its highest point of intellectual and ethical efficiency, and, like Ezra again, he inaugurated a new epoch in Jewish history. Israel, crushed by Roman arms, and voluntarily relinquishing Greek culture, was to be saved in its schools from the evil consequences of defeat and self-involution. The *Torah*, expanded by Oral Law, was to become the Jewish world, and the world was to be made safe for theocracy.*

In *Aboth* (the Fathers)† or *Pirke* (chapters of)

* Otherwise, and more aptly, nomocracy.

† Known in the Prayer Book as Ethics of the Fathers.

Aboth, the best-known tractate of the *Mishna*, there is a catalogue of famous men from Moses to the fall of Jerusalem, who form the succession of the *Torah*. The opening paragraph narrates that "Moses received the Law on Sinai and handed it down to Joshua; Joshua to the Elders; the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets handed it down to the men of (Ezra's) Great Synagogue. These said three things: Be deliberate in judgment; Raise up many disciples; and Make a fence round the *Torah*. Simon the Just was one of the last survivors of the Great Synagogue. He used to say: Upon three things the world is based: upon *Torah*, upon the Temple service, and upon the practice of Charity." This Simon, we may add, was High Priest at the beginning of the third century B.C., and the title of "the Just" may have been given to him on account of his leanings to Pharisaism, in distinction to the generality of High Priests, who belonged to the aristocratic and Hellenizing Sadducees. *Aboth* then continues the list through several pairs of names to those of Hillel and Shammai, friendly rivals and contemporaries in the first century. "Hillel said: Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace; loving thy fellow-creatures, drawing them near to *Torah*. He used to say, too: He who does not increase his knowledge, decreases it. If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And being for

my own self, what am I? And if not now, when? Shammai said: Fix a period for thy study of *Torah*; say little and do much, and receive all men with a cheerful countenance." With regard to the sayings attributed to Shammai, it may be remarked that his injunction to "say little and do much" would seem to contradict the reproach of "saying, but doing not," which Matthew, not many years after, reported that Jesus brought against the Pharisees. As to receiving everyone with friendliness, we should note that the student mentioned above, who wanted to short-circuit his studies, went to Shammai before he came to Hillel, but was not as genially received; accounts agree that Shammai was more rigid and Hillel more indulgent in his interpretation of their common mistress *Torah*. Hillel himself had been poor: the tale is told that once, on a cold evening, when he could not produce the modest fee for the doorkeeper at a lecture-room, he climbed on to the window-sill, and listened to the lecture from outside; and this fellow-feeling touched him to human sympathy and filled his teaching with ethical values. He spoke more of man's duty to his neighbour than of his duty to God; and another of his teachings, which may serve as a corrective to Matthew's scorn of the uncleanness under the whited sepulchres, was his insistence on personal cleanliness and the care of the body. "They wash the

statues," he would say, "and beautify the Temple. How much more ought we to cleanse the temple of the soul!" One specific reform instituted by Hillel illustrates both the methods and the aims of this shining light of the Pharisees, in the very epoch of revolt against the Law, which he helped to fasten as a heavenly crown on a people dispossessed of their earthly kingdom. Deuteronomy xv. 1-11 lays down the rule of release in the seventh or sabbath-year. It concludes with the noble sentiment, which has ever been binding in Israel: "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy." But the warning addressed to the wicked in verse 9 had been proved by experience to be necessary, and there were those who availed themselves of the pretext of a Sabbath-year to withhold their hand from a helpful loan. So Hillel introduced into Jewish law a so-called *Prosbol*, or *ad hoc* undertaking, which was worded in such a way as to protect credit and not to obstruct trade. The fact is interesting in relation to Hillel's activity, as an exponent and extensionist of *Torah*; it is interesting, too, as an indication of the practical side of his labours; while his necessary use of a Greek term (*prosbolé*) for an instrument of the Hebrew code is also worth remarking. They Hellenized in their own despite.

§ 2. THE DREAM OF A SHADE.

This expulsion of Greece from Judæa may be illustrated by a side-light from Josephus. Textual critics of his *Antiquities* tell us that certain parts of it were written by collaborators better versed in Attic Greek than he, and, among Thucydidean echoes cited in support of this contention, we may submit additionally the opening words of Book xviii., § 3. There Josephus or his collaborator states that "the Pharisees are too economical with their way of life, and leave nothing over for the softer side." The phrasing, and particularly the keywords *eutelia* and *malakia*, recall what Pericles, according to Thucydides, said of the Athenians of his day: "We pursue beauty with economy, and wisdom without softness." If the younger writer, as it would seem, was recollecting and even imitating the older, he plainly intended to contrast, to the disadvantage of the Jews, the Greek and Jewish (or Pharisaic) ways of life—their *diet*, as an eye-witness saw it. The Greeks loved beauty, but not to excess, and knew how far to go with "soft options"; the Jews, æsthetically under-developed, deliberately chose the harsher rule; and it is to be observed that the Essenes among them, a sect of dissenting Pharisees, whose small numbers were dwindling at this time, pushed the cult of

asceticism to an extreme, and were nearer to monks than any of their co-religionists.

Josephus had a bias to Rome, and a stronger bias to the pleasant path of the Hellenizers, and *a fortiori* his more purely Greek collaborator would be less likely to be just to Pharisaism. Accordingly, we are not to take their view of the Greek and Jewish *diets*, or ways of life, as either full or final. Still less are we to conclude from the historical fact of the retreat of the Jews in good order into their own way, after the catastrophe of A.D. 70-71, that they went therefore out of a way of progress, or that they were false to the light, or that moss grew over them from that date. It is very tempting to register such a conclusion, and to ride away on it out of the study of Jewish history, content to pick up its stray threads, as "the Jews," or some Jews, or conspicuous Jews, emerge from the darkness of the ghettos. This in-and-out procedure with Jewish history, as if the Jews had no history of their own, but are then, and then only, significant when representative Jews come in contact with the histories of the nations—of Spain, France, Germany, England, Poland, Russia, and the rest—is but incompletely true. For, outside these emergings into the nations' histories, Jews were making history all the time; the Jewish way of life was going on, and was obeying the natural law of growth. If the Jews had gone out of

every road of progress, when, as Josephus again said, they "set themselves to carry out their laws with rigour," they must inevitably have declined, physically and intellectually alike. For nature knows neither miracle nor paradox. The survival of the Jews, and their increase in numbers and strength, is due to natural causes, though it may seem contrary to expectation, and philosophers of history are aware that the temporary truce patched by Philo, and renewed at Florence by Pico della Mirandola, between Hellenism and Hebraism, must be sealed by a permanent alliance, in order that modern civilization may at last *cernere hæreditatem*—survey and utilize for good the twofold legacy which it inherits.

It is necessary to rehearse this point of view before following the Jews into their seeming darkness, and to keep it steadily in front of us during their sojourn in the shadow. *Their necessity was a contribution to civilization.* If their defeat by Rome had led, as was likely, to their extinction and disappearance, there would have been a consequent loss to the civilization of the Christian era, although they had contributed to it already Jesus and the Hebrew Bible. Pharisaism reaped from their defeat a harvest which has fed the Gentiles, and it is due to that profit, derived from, but seldom credited to, Jewish suffering, to examine rather closely the re-making of Judaism after Vespasian's triumph.

The ship of state was broken, and the Jews, who were not of one race, and who spoke two or more native languages, now ceased to be a nation.* They went to earth, like a wounded animal, to lick their sores, and the Pharisees, who took command, by right of dominance in policy and numbers, had to supply, and almost to invent, a bond equal, or superior, in unifying force to race, language, and nationality. The task demanded all the *eutelia* (economy of energy) and none of the *malakia* (self-indulgence) of human nature, all the Hebrew and none of the Greek qualities, and demanded them at once and in overflowing measure.

In trying to estimate the success of the cure by Pharisaism, we may apply one very simple test. The philosophy of the Pharisees is fairly obvious, if we do not seek it exclusively in the Gospel narratives. But what of their psychology? Their task was to provide the Jews, dispossessed of their national being, with a religious being to take its place, or, more precisely, to re-state in terms of theocracy the political power of a stricken generation. The labours of the Jewish schoolmen, wide and miscellaneous though they were, almost entirely ignored the department of political jurisprudence; it was sparsely provided in the *Torah*, and no practical object would have been served by expanding such material as was avail-

* See Note 2.

able. But at the same time these reformers, directing the repaired ship on its new course, had to deal with Jews as they were. Turning a nation into a religious community, and filling its empty, stretching days with a sufficient and sustaining diet, they had to fill up the room of lost things, like Constance with her child in *King John*, without losing the present sense of loss. They had to be conservative in their reform, and the simple test which we may apply is the response of the Jewish consciousness to a national call nineteen centuries after the Roman War. There was an old drawing-room game called "Buried Cities." Jerusalem was the buried city of the Jews, and in order to divert their attention from fruitless repining and despair, the schoolmen built over it a cairn of moral and ceremonial ordinances. Complete compliance with those ordinances took all the time of the Jews, and so replaced the buried city; the unremitting labours of the teachers, and the domestic familiarity of the precepts, fulfilled the brave and gracious aim of forgetting by remembering. For the psychology of the Pharisees was true. Jerusalem spoke from beneath her cairn. Her voice, half-hushed and partly rehabilitated, went up in worship and prayer, on echoes of psalter and of prophecy: "Rebuild the walls of Jerusalem," "As one whom his mother comforteth," "If I forget thee," and so forth; and it did not become mechanical, as such

reiterated petitions may become, because of the Messianic hope which always belonged to Pharisaic Judaism. Thus, when the Zionist movement was consummated in 1917, after several false starts in the nineteenth century, by the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine, religious Judaism, repaired by the Pharisees, after the shattering of the ship of state, was in touch with submerged political Judaism. The "restored" possession was not a "fake," but a genuine "antique."

The course of this historical essay will bring us back to modern Zionism. Here we have touched in passing on the continuity of Jewish teaching, and the permanent work of the schoolmen, in order to emphasize one aspect of their contribution to civilization. When the Jews retired, or were driven, from the phantasmagoria of rising and falling States, and, herded into minorities, were outlawed from secular pursuits, they tended a guarded flame, a faith that could not fail, *skias onar*, the dream of a shade. Out of the alleys of the ghettos, the shadow-State of the Jews lifted up its utopian towers, and was built, literally, like a mosaic, into the institutions and literature of modern Europe. One expert, for instance, tells us that "all the essential characteristics of Dantean and Arabian eschatology will be found in Jewish literature. . . . The genesis of these ideas is Jewish."* Again, we shall come to

* *The Legacy of Israel*, p. 170; Prof. Guillaume's essay.

details later on. Here we are first concerned, in the epoch of the re-commissioning of the broken ship, to delineate the kind of Judaism which was saved from the wreck by Jewish schoolmen. Pharisaic Judaism and the ghettos which it illumined have been judged very freely from the outside and by those who left its ranks; an inside view may explain how it happened that, below the huddled roofs and behind the cruel bars of those compounds, shone the perpetual light of a not ignoble hope. The growth of the Messianic idea has been traced from its earliest indication of a wise and mighty prince of David's house, who should bring peace and happiness to his own people, through the enlargement of his reign over all peoples of the earth, to the transcendental visions of the Jewish Apocryphal, Apocalyptic, and Sibylline books. We need not pursue this evolution, which is a branch of special study, and which belongs to the history of Christianity and Islam as well as of Judaism; but it pertains to our present purpose to observe that the course of its growth tended gradually to replace the physical boundaries of Palestine, as the heritable holy land of the Jews, by the dissolving frontiers of a Messianic empire. The Book of Daniel dates from the second century B.C., and even there we find the long dream upon which these visions were founded: "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a king-

dom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (vii. 14, 27). This was an empire vaster than Rome's, and a restoration to a more durable Jerusalem. Again, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (ii. 44)—theocracy, eternity, and an eschatological reconstruction, in which were built those utopian ideals of peace, justice, love, fruitfulness, longevity, painless labour, work without weariness, snakes without stings, which recur again and again in later writings, and which, visualized as Zion, took pious Jews further and further from the lost status of a political people. Yet their "Paradise Lost" was a "Paradise Regained." The new Jerusalem would not deny the old. Pharisaism in a very real sense was "true to the kindred points of heaven and home"—the kingdom of heaven to be set up, and the earthly home to be restored.

§ 3. THE SETTLEMENT AT JABNE.

So we come to the Law at Jabne, and to the Jewish life foretold in the covenant of Nehemiah, when "all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, everyone having knowledge, and having understanding, entered into an oath to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses, the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord, our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes" (x. 28-29): the life for which a motto might have been chosen from the words of Ezra, its true begetter, "And let it be done according to *Torah*" (x. 3).

The story is told that, in A.D. 70, the veteran Rabbi Jochanan ben Zakkai, who is called in the Talmud "the youngest of Hillel's pupils," foreseeing, as was readily to be foreseen, the impending fall of Jerusalem, caused himself to be carried out in a coffin, since desertion of the doomed city was high treason. He made his way to the Roman commander, and, representing himself as spokesman of the pacifists, begged to be allowed to settle with a group of friends and disciples in Jabne, or Jamnia, near Jaffa, where they would establish a school. The Talmudic tale may combine fragments of various legends, afloat in an epoch of disorder and defeat. Its value lies in its evidence to the historical facts, first,

that the dominant Pharisees contained leaders sufficiently foresightful to anticipate and to provide for the immediate needs of post-war Judaism; secondly, that those needs took shape in non-political schools of religious practice; and, thirdly, that Vespasian and the Romans consented to spare Jabne in order to afford a coign for the Jewish religious retreat. Lud, or Lydda, and Tiberias, later became Palestinian headquarters, ultimately succeeding to the original settlement of the law-givers at Jabne. There the Sanhedrin of Jerusalem was reorganized, under Pharisaic auspices, as a modest but adequate court of justice, which discharged what was left of the functions of the priestly college of the Sadducees. After the lapse of a couple of centuries, Babylonian Judaism, which was at first a kind of second line of Jewish defence, was constituted independently, and enjoyed a greater measure of freedom than the succession of Christian to Pagan Rome left to the Jews of Palestine. But the provision made by Jochanan ben Zakkai, when, symbolically, as we may see it, the old man left Jerusalem as a corpse, was always a refuge from the State and a retreat to the Synagogue, and the fact that the Palestinian Talmud dates from the fourth century A.D., and the Babylonian from the fifth, clearly indicates the kind of Jewish law which the nomocrats imposed on their devoted followers.

Jochanan was succeeded at Jabne by Gamaliel II. (so distinguished from his rabbinic grandfather, Gamaliel I.), who enjoyed and fully availed himself of a long term of authoritative activity as leader of the Sanhedrin. We gather that his was a harsh rule, though, no doubt, he encountered grave obstacles both within and without his community; within, partly because the disciples of Hillel were more leniently disposed than those of Shammai, and partly, too, because the object of his reforms was not as obvious to others as to himself; without, because as *Nasi*, or Patriarch, of the Jewish communes he represented them before the Roman overlord, and conflicts of opinion were inevitable. There was also his trouble with the "Jewish Christians" and with those who leaned to the "wisdom of the Greeks," to whom Gamaliel was invincibly opposed; and his task may perhaps be conceived as something like that of his co-religionist, Walther Rathenau, in Germany after another war, though in a far intenser degree. More fortunate than Rathenau, Gamaliel escaped assassination at the hands of the wild men whose counsels he controlled. We may cite two aspects of his work before passing through a briefer notice of Rabbi Akiba, on whom Gamaliel's mantle fell, to a more general consideration of the Jewish way of life under the Law. These two aspects are (1) the Calendar and (2) the Liturgy.

The Calendar.—It was as a remnant of the abrogated State functions of the Jerusalem Government that the Patriarchate at Jabne was concerned with the Calendar, but its whole interest in that respect was directed solely to sacred purposes. It happens that in the British Parliament the Established Church is represented in the Upper House, so that a Bill appointing a fixed Easter, for example, can be discussed by one and the same body in its ecclesiastical and secular capacities. But it happens, too, that Easter is a festival which is observed outside England, so that such an Act, though *le Roy le veult*, would not bind observers of Easter who were not subjects of his Britannic Majesty. In Jabne the conditions were at once like and different. They were like in the sense that the chiefs of the Sanhedrin, among whom Gamaliel was supreme, could neglect the distinction between ecclesiastical and secular spheres: they passed laws for a Church which was co-extensive with a (nominal) State. They were different in the sense that no one outside their jurisdiction observed the occasions for which they legislated. It followed that they would communicate their decrees to the Jews scattered throughout the world, with the assurance that all concerned would obey the law of Jabne. Here it is to be noted, however, that this far-flung empire of Jewish law does not obtain today. There is no

longer a central station of legislation, no longer a Jabne with a Gamaliel, obliging the Jews in every country to do this or not to do that. The absence of such a centre produces contrary effects. It increases local liberty, but it decreases at the same time the common autonomy of the Jews. Since there is no international body exercising legislative authority over Judaism as a whole, it is not possible to alter its code with effect on all Jews. Inferentially, local Chief Rabbis, in countries where such a functionary is appointed, are reluctant to sanction any change which would separate their flocks from Jewish communities outside. Thus, the law has become static, and there is no synod of rabbis competent to amend Rabbinic Judaism. For legislative purposes, the Synagogue of Jabne was as catholic as the Church of Rome, while Jewish congregations today are localized like the Church of England.

This digression, the sense of which will recur in subsequent chapters, is necessary to a complete understanding of Gamaliel's action with the Jewish calendar. The Hebrew year is calculated by the phases of the moon, and Palestine communities were warned of the appearance of the new moon by a chain of flares on the hill-tops. But more distant communities, which had to observe the new moon, and the fasts and feasts regulated by its appearance, on the same days

as the Palestinians, were advised by a series of messengers. Thus, punctuality of advice and coincidence of observance were uncertain: sufficiently uncertain, indeed, to warrant the new rule that outside Palestine the most important festivals (Passover, Pentecost, New Year, Tabernacles) should be prolonged each by a day, so that, during a part, at least, of such twice twenty-four hours' celebration, every congregation in Israel, even at the most distant ends of the Diaspora, should be keeping the Holy Day simultaneously. This is the Rabbinical origin of what are known as Jewish "second days," which, by a self-denying ordinance of the Jews—and an ordinance likewise denying the more exact astronomy of today—are still regarded as orthodox. Jabne could promulgate this law to suit the backward science and the imperfect means of communication in the first century, and there is no Rabbinical authority competent to annul it in the twentieth. In this sense, the progressive spirit of modern Reform and Liberal Judaism, which goes behind Rabbinical case-law, may be deemed more genuinely traditional than the rigidity of the Orthodox Synagogues.

The Liturgy.—Gamaliel's reform of the prayer-book derives its importance from the fact that he set himself successfully, and not without opposition, to express through that medium the change of direction which has been pointed out. Where

Jerusalem had been, the New Jerusalem should be, and the building of the New Jerusalem, not as the Romans practised it after A.D. 135, but as the Pharisees idealized it in their Messianic vision, was to replace in Jewish hearts the former occupation of Jewish hands in the customary offices of the Temple. Satisfaction, fulfilment, completion were to be set back a stage, and, by setting them back, they were to be raised in spiritual significance. As a chief means to this end Gamaliel and his coadjutors finally formulated the so-called "Eighteen Blessings" (*Sh'moneh 'essreh*), which is only second to the *Shema'* in antiquity and authority, and which, as revised at that time, was ordered to be recited three times daily by every Israelite, man, woman, child, and slave, at morning, noon, and evening. This injunction is still valid, and the "Blessings" are sometimes referred to, quite simply, as "The Prayer" (*ha-Tefilah*). Taken together with the *Shema'*, the great affirmation of monotheism, the praises of the *Sh'moneh 'essreh* and the lofty petitions which they convey touch a level rarely surpassed in liturgical composition. The fugitives driven from their capital to a wayside station near the coast, where they re-formed their religious being, were taught by the Pharisees to indue themselves with spiritual autonomy and an independence of worldly fortune. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One," rang the uncompromising

declaration of Judaism, and three times a day every Jew and Jewess, in every Jewish home throughout the world, imbibed and repeated such benedictions as are contained in the *Amidah*,* with its three Blessings of Praise, its twelve (thirteen by subdivision) Petitions, and its three Blessings of Thanks. Perhaps the most characteristically Jewish of these paragraphs is the fourth Blessing (the first Petition), which says: "Thou favourest man with knowledge, and teachest mortals understanding," which is to be compared with 1 Kings iii. 7. The twelfth and thirteenth are also important, the one being directed against Jewish antinomians, and the other being an ancient prayer for the safety of right-thinking Jews.

We are writing of A.D. 100 and thereabouts. Thrice daily, at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century of the Christian era, the Jews, dispossessed of Jerusalem and the Temple of their cult, compelled to contribute to Jupiter the double drachmas collected for Jehovah, driven as meat for lions to Roman circuses, and sold into slavery from Roman marts, proclaimed the unity of God, His omnipotence and eternity, praised Him for His gifts of knowledge, insight and understanding, invoked His forgiveness for their sins and His healing for their

* *Amidah*, standing. "Standing means Prayer" is a Talmudic dictum.

wounds, and prayed for the restoration of His presence to Zion. "Our life is in Thy hands; our souls are in Thy charge; Thy wondrous, awful and gracious deeds are ever before us, in the evening, in the morning, and at noonday." What of other countries in those days? What of Britain, for example? We may cite the testimony of Sir Charles Oman from a page of his history headed with this very date, A.D. 100: "The Romanization of exterior culture," he writes, "was accompanied by the Romanization of religion. Like so many other provincials of the West, the Britons proceeded to make rough identifications between their own divinities and the Romano-Greek pantheon of their conquerors. The larger half of the altars and shrines discovered in Britain are simply set up to honour the ordinary gods of the Roman world. Cæsar-worship, the most typical development of the religion of the Roman empire, is found widely spread."* So far, Britain. We need not multiply the evidence. But, first observing that Judaism as a religion was not persecuted till the Christianization of Rome—an observation which will recur in the next section—it is relevant to our context to note that the temptation to "Romanize their religion" was steadily resisted by the conquered Jews.

* *England before the Norman Conquest*, 5th ed., p. 107.

§ 4. THE ORDEAL OF THE LAW.

If we bring together the perceptions in the concluding paragraphs above—the injunction to prolong the Holy Days beyond the brief phases of the moon, and the inculcation of the doctrine that an increase of understanding and a turning away from sin would hasten the redemption of Zion—we shall better appreciate the means sought by the Jewish schoolmen to prevent disintegration within and assimilation without. As draftsmen and statesmen of the Oral Law, implementing the written Law of the Hebrew Scriptures, their object was to fill Jewish life with the performance of God's will, and to make the way of the Law at once present and pleasant for Jews to walk in. Of the School at Jabne it might be said, in comparison with the Temple at Jerusalem, as the poet said at the assumption by the heaven-descended child of his duties on earth,

The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

National memories were to be muted and transmuted. Neither the lure of Greek wisdom nor the ease of Roman custom was to prevail against the tremendous mission of Israel as the people chosen by the Lord to attest his unity. Founded on the reforms of Ezra, and fortified by the

labours of later scribes, by the example of the Pharisees, and by the constructive genius of Hillel, Jochanan ben Zakkai, Gamaliel and their successors, Rabbinic Judaism planted its "vineyard" and built its "fence" round the Law (both these metaphors are in the Talmud), and preserved the enclosure against all comers, whether they came with privileges or with a scourge. The privileges were the right which a conquered nation were entitled to demand from their conquerors, and which they demanded with desperate courage when the conqueror sought to withdraw them; the scourge was the obverse of the privileges, when the pagan Empire, turned Christian, was defending a rival faith.

It will be convenient at this stage very briefly to examine both ordeals—the withdrawal of the privileges and the infliction of the scourge—so as to realize more clearly the precariousness of the liberties, which the Law only was left to protect, and the consequent care of its makers and reformers to strengthen its defences at all points. "I will walk at liberty, for I seek Thy precepts" (Ps. cxix. 45) expressed a very real experience in the hard Jewish way of life.

We are not concerned in detail with Jewish contacts in the extension of the Roman Empire. They will be found in the annals of that State, which did not resign its vanished pomp till Napoleon pricked it to the dust, and such echoes

of them as are heard in the Talmud display more emotion than historicity. The essence of it, shortly, is this. We saw that the regulations of Jabne had to be communicated by messengers to Jews in the Diaspora, and that the distance of those large communities required a prolongation of the period of each chief festival. We may deduce from these facts that such Jews were consciously less docile to the patience learned in Palestine, and, presumably, less hopeful of its rewards. They were more rebellious, in a word, and more dependent on their own right hand. Thus, when Trajan in 115-117 was spreading the peace of Rome to the eastern boundaries of his empire, he came in conflict with the Jews in those regions, as a separate and inveterate foe; and when Hadrian succeeded to the sceptre (117-138), this conflict became more acute. It would not be flattering to that ruler to compare him with the German Kaiser of the Great War, but a resemblance lies in the diverse activities of the two monarchs as architects and artists, and Hadrian's journey to Palestine in 131, when coins were struck with the inscription *Adventui Augusti Judææ* (for the coming of Augustus to Judæa), might have been recalled at William's advent in 1898. Hadrian hugged the ambition of rebuilding Jerusalem as a Roman city, and of founding on the site of the Temple an immense shrine for the worship of Jupiter. This sacrilege

by Hadrian *restitutor* (*destitutor*?) aroused the Jews beyond bearing, and the flames of revolt in the further provinces were fanned to red heat in Palestine. Fractions of the defeated population had continued, as in Germany after the Great War, to collect and practise arms, and these military corners were now enlarged to a widespread and open rebellion. The chief successor to Gamaliel at Jabne, Rabbi Akiba himself, was privy to, if not a participant in, the rising, the ringleader of which was a certain Simon Bar-Cosiba, which means son, or native, of Cosiba. Akiba suggested in his enthusiasm that the leader's name should be changed to Bar-Cochba, son of a star, by which he is commonly known; and when the revolt had failed, and the star of its leader had set, his disillusioned followers called him Bar-Cosba, son of a lie. However this may be, the last stand was made at Beth-ther,* in 135, after three and a half years' vain but gallant fighting, and on the same day, ninth of Ab, associated in the Hebrew calendar with the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and in 586 B.C. And the result? The Emperor-architect had his way. Ælia Capitolina—Ælia for Ælius Hadrianus, Capitolina for Jupiter Capitolinus—replaced Jerusalem on the Roman map. No Jew might enter the new city. The new Temple was

* Probably Bittir, on the railroad from Jerusalem to Jaffa.

dedicated to the heathen god, with a statue of Hadrian in its centre, and Bacchus, Serapis, and other deities appeared on the Palestinian coinage. We pass over the martyrdom of rabbis, the heroic Akiba among them, and the more wholesale acts of revenge, which repeated even more severely the Jewish terror at the triumph of Vespasian. But one fact cannot be passed over. A prime motive of Bar-Cochba's rebellion had been Hadrian's prohibition of circumcision, a practice not exclusively Jewish (though solely in Judaism a religious rite), and liable to be confused with castration. This prohibition, whatever its intention, had been regarded as an attack on Jewish privilege, and Hadrian, after his victory, decided to enforce it in this sense. Compliance with "the covenant of Abraham" became punishable by death, and it was not till the reign of Antoninus Pius (d. 161) that the formal ban on this Jewish rite, as practised among themselves, was lifted. Other practices, too, were attacked or penalized, and Jewish life retired more and more securely, behind the fence of *Torah*, to the sheltered rule set at Jabne by the Pharisees. All that was left of a Jewish State were the prayers, thrice daily repeated, and the tears, once a year, at the Wailing Wall.*

We may deal even more briefly with the scourge. The pagan Emperors had destroyed

* See Note 3.

the Jewish State, even to the obliteration of Jerusalem and the erection of a heathen city on its site. But within the ambit of Roman law, they had protected, however contemptuously, the Jewish religion. It ranked for that purpose less as a religion than as a curious collection of harmless customs, which, presumably, had a national significance for those who chose to observe them, and with which, so long as they were harmless, it was not worth Rome's while to interfere. But if a custom became a nuisance to the Roman State, economically, socially, politically, or in any other way, it had to go: for instance, the queer custom *mutilandi genitalia* was not to be encouraged within the Empire. It was anti-social. Did the Jews require exemption? Let them have it—up to a point. But the custom was seen to be more widely spread. So it had to go, for society's sake, and the Jews would have to do without it. Did their Rabbis, Akiba and Bar-Cochba (as they called him), resist in arms? They should be crushed, and their noisome custom with them. And even if this custom were again excepted in the Jews' favour, since they hold it so dear, the episode should be scored up against them, for the insolence of the custom and the importunity of the demand. Their State was dust, they were a people fit for slavery, and it was only within the convenience of Roman law that they

could be permitted to practise their national *sacra*.

The Christian Emperors, from Constantine in the fourth century, inherited this contempt of the Jews, and added to it a detestation of the Jewish creed. More precisely, where pagan Rome had destroyed a State, Christian Rome went out to destroy a Church, and where the one had tolerated national customs, the other saw religious crimes to uproot. The pagan charges against the Jews were adopted—and adapted to Christian use. Did they avoid images? Not Cæsar, but the Saviour, was offended by this distaste; and a long list of qualities may be cited, more strange than unkind, which Roman law found objectionable on secular grounds, and which Christianity contrived to turn to signs of impiety, atheism, and the like. When the Christianization of the Roman Empire changed Judaism from a collection of customs to a heresy of the Church, the religion had to follow the fallen State. “Les Juifs,” writes Dr. Juster, in his richly documented analysis of the Roman law on this subject, “sont pour les législateurs les ennemis des lois romaines, les insulteurs de la foi Chrétienne, gens aux sens obstrués, les pires des hommes, et leur nom même est affreux, hideux.”* It was thus a heavy indictment, under

* J. Juster, *op. cit.*, i. 252-3. They are “une perversité, dont les réunions sont sacrilèges, dont le contact pollue.”

which, added to their defeat in arms, the Jews entered the Christian era, and it was in response to this succession of attacks—by pagan Rome against their State and by Christian Rome against their creed—that they were bidden by their Pharisaic doctors to invoke the “Eighteen Blessings” on God’s mercy and love to his chosen people.

§ 5. THE COMFORT OF JERUSALEM.

“And in Jerusalem shall ye be comforted.” We cannot get away from this contrast between the Jews’ Jews and the Jews of their pagan and Christian neighbours. It is by the Jews’ Jews’ contribution to the civilization of the Christian era that they are finally to be judged. If that contribution was worth making, then the Pharisees and Rabbis did well to save the Jews to make it. If their effort was nugatory and wasted, then either we may admire the stubborn will which forced the Jews into the way of the Law, as a sheer example of human resolution, or, according to our disposition, we may join the Church Fathers in execrating it. We shall have the open or tacit assent of sixteen centuries in the latter attitude. As Tacitus wrote so long ago, “*Augebat iras quod soli Judæi non cessissent*”: it increased resentment that the Jews alone did not know when they were beaten. But whether we admire

or resent the Jewish way, as the Jews reformed it out of the wreck of their country and the hate of their creed, that way will present no historic interest except by its service to humanity—to the advancement of learning and the progress of truth. We believe that, despite the evils which pursuers of a narrow way must encounter, and which tend inevitably to mark them out from the companionable crowd on the trite road, judgment is favourable, on the whole, to the choice of separateness by the Jews. Items of their varied contribution will appear in due course. Here we may hazard the opinion that, if they had Romanized their customs or Christianized their beliefs, something valuable, which they preserved by resistance, would have been lost to the world, and, holding that opinion, even though holding it in suspense, we should acquaint ourselves here with the way of salvation which they followed.

It would increase strangeness to multiply names, but two men later than Gamaliel stand out pre-eminent for their share in the making of Scholastic Judaism. These are (1) Rabbi Jehuda, the Patriarch (*ha-Nasi*), whose *floruit* occurred in the second century, and (2) Abba Areka, who flourished in the third, and with whom should be mentioned Samuel Jarchinai. These two were both pupils of Rabbi Jehuda. They transported his methods to Babylon, and the former, like his master in Palestine, became known for

his learning's sake, by the title of Teacher alone. Rabbi Jehuda was called, too, *ha-Kadosh* (the holy), and bears the honourable appellation of "Rabbi" for short; similarly, Abba Areka is recognized by the Babylonian equivalents of "Rab." Jehuda's renown is derived from his labour in sifting and co-ordinating the decisions and contents of the Oral Law, which had been handed down by word of mouth since the generation of Ezra, and in compiling them to a systematic code in the *Mishna* (complementary to the *Torah*), which served as the basis of the Talmud. The oralists, from Hillel downwards, of whose services Jehuda availed himself, were henceforward known as *Tannaim* (teachers), and later scholars in the same line were known by the lesser title of *Amoraim* (interpreters).* Rab and Samuel, on their return to their native Babylon after studying under Rabbi in Palestine, made similar contributions to the future Babylonian Talmud, and gave a lead to Jewish learning in that country. Samuel, who survived Rab about ten years, died in 257, and was famed not only as a Talmudic doctor but for his studies in mathematics and the sciences. He used to say that the streets of the stars were as familiar to him as those of his own town: only the comets puzzled

* See Ch. I., § 2. *Mishna* means repetition, and the *Mishna*, in the root-meaning of the word, is virtually deutero-*Torah*.

him. He founded on Jeremiah xxix. 7 the great principle of Judaism in the Diaspora, "The law of the land is law," and he laid stress on the old Jewish rule of just weights and just measures. Rab, like Gamaliel before him, adorned the liturgy with song and prayer, and is the probably reputed author of the great "'*Alenu*"* prose-hymn, which still concludes public worship, and which expresses with majestic force the Messianism and universalism of Jewish belief. It anticipates the time "when the world will be perfected unto the kingdom of the Almighty, and all the children of flesh will call upon thy name. . . . Let all the inhabitants of the world perceive and know that unto thee every knee must bow, every tongue must swear. . . . And it is said, And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall the Lord be One, and his name One."

Plainly, it was not a failure in lofty teaching which degraded, in the eyes of Church Fathers, Jewish entrants into the Christian era to the ranks of "*les pires des hommes*." Perhaps they forgot that even "the meanest of His creatures" had a soul-side which he did not turn to Rome.

The comfort of Jerusalem was composed, in the epoch of *Ælia Capitolina*, out of an ideal hope seizable by real sacrifices. The sacrifices partook of the ideal, the ideal was realized in the sacrifices. We wrote in Chapter I., § 4, of

* See Note 4.

the *Mitzvoth*, or commandments, deduced orally from the Law of Moses for every relation of every act of life, which it was a joy to obey, and which brought as their reward opportunities for further joy. Here, in conclusion to this matter of the saving of Judaism for the Jews by an extension of Pharisaic practice, we may consider one or two characteristics of Jewish life under the Law. Unquestionably, it was a strict life—a life strictly hemmed in by rules untiringly and elaborately unfolded out of the original body of the *Torah* by jurisprudents skilled in casuistry and trained to the craft which enchained them. The modern competition of crossword puzzles, with its apparatus of reference-books, and its main appeal to an unlit wit, recalls the *kind*—far intenser in its *degree*—of brain and will which were required for the mechanical part of these endless tasks: endless, literally, because each end was a new beginning, and supplied a clue, so to speak, for a fresh excursion into interpretation and for the construction of another coil of the never-finished code. It was a blind business, if we review it without regard to the zeal of its devotees and the grandeur of the object of their devotion, and it might lead to equivocal results. It might stifle independence of judgment. It might replace principle by case-law. It might obstruct conduct by regulation. Even the *streng verboten* of Prussian police before the War helped to make a generation

careless of character, and the Pharisaic code was the work of many generations. It might happen, too, that one casuist would find a way out of an impasse in which another casuist had tied himself, and the consequent threat to morality is obvious. That all these evils ensued, and that the completed Talmud, in either version, yields indisputable spoils to the searcher for ill-intentioned word-play, for ambiguous meanings, equivocal ratiocination, ungrounded expediency, and the like, is not to be denied. But the whole thing has another side, a better side, and, veritably, the truer side. The dark side was turned to the world, the bright side to the God of Israel. The Talmud has the defects of its qualities, but the defects belong to the written work, the qualities belonged to those who made it. They made it with admirable intention, with an uncompromising desire to do right, with an unfading and an unremitted zest to serve God only and God always—the God of Moses and Jesus, not of pagan or Christian Rome.

After all, it is motive which counts, and the life which exalts the law. We would not make a twilight of the dark places, though even this task might be attempted, and the number of them perhaps exaggerates the rare darkness of the counsels that caused them. But we would make a brilliance of the light, which, when every star had been extinguished, including Bar-Cochba

himself, was thrown across the night of Jewish history by the faithful schoolmen and scribes. By their prayers we may know them, and from one or two of these we have cited extracts, but we know them, too by their deeds, as performed by their disciples. The strictness which might betray the scribes into byways of the letter, was transformed by performance into grave spiritual discipline, and for the gravity of the yoke its bearers recited the Eighteen Benedictions: "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who lovest righteousness and justice. . . . Blessed be Thou, O Lord, who healest the wounds of Thy people Israel." The strict life was tenderer than the strict law, more homely, more familiar, more consoling, and those who lived it were no victims of casuistry, tapping a difficult way through clue leading to clue, but simple, pious, anxious men and women, genuinely seeking instruction and guidance in a world singularly inhospitable to their genius. Moses Mendelssohn, in the eighteenth century, made a generalization about Judaism which may be accepted broadly as true. He declared that it is not a dogmatic religion. Its sages and lawgivers do not say, You shall believe or not believe this or that; they say, You shall do or not do this or that; and certainly, in considering the way of life laid down for the Jews by the teachers whose labours went to make the Talmud, Mendelssohn's reading is correct. Life was a school, a *disci-*

plina, and since the centre of Jewish life was the Synagogue, the German word *Schule* was transferred in the Yiddish dialect of later ghettos to designate the Synagogue as a *Shool*.^{*} Elementary schools were established by the Jews at least as early as the second century A.D., and it is likely that, even a hundred years before, children of seven and eight years old were sent to some such institution. But these schools were Synagogue-schools. The basis of the curriculum was the *Torah*, and the pupils, particularly the boys, through whom the community was to be preserved, were trained in the multifarious religious usages which kept that community intact. At thirteen the boy became *Bar Mitzvah*, which means a Son of the Commandment, competent to perform the *Mitzvoth*, which brought him into relation with God. It was not a "Confirmation," in the sense of accepting the tenets of a creed; it was rather an enfranchisement, in the sense of the boy's promotion from school to the complete living, for which his education had prepared him. At eighteen, he was ripe for marriage, for the Jewish cell was the monogamous household, united in the study of the *Torah*, in the loving observance of its meticulous commands, in seizing

* In translating the Hebrew word for "synagogue" into European languages, the equivalent for "church" was naturally avoided. Possibly the *shool* was derived from the sense of a "collection" (school, shoal), which would be close to the literal meaning of "synagogue."

opportunities for so behaving as to lay up a reward in heaven, and in bidding a cheerful welcome to the full and busy religious life.* It may be asked, what was the object of all this instruction? and, indeed, the critics of Judaism as a *merely* legalistic way of life do ask this question with some urgency. The answer probably is, that Judaism never was such a merely legalistic system. No finer statement of this answer can be quoted than that of Dr. C. G. Montefiore, who, as the founder of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in England, is more responsible than any other British Jew for supplanting ceremonial observance by moral and spiritual ideas. Yet he is able to bear witness, that "Legalism gave to Judaism great qualities and great strength: it also gave to Judaism—or rather to the Judaism of the long legal period—the defects of its qualities. People tended to identify goodness with the keeping of the commands in the Law. Many of those commands were of a ritual character; prominent among the ritual laws were the laws about food and the laws about the Sabbath. These ordinances were interpreted and elaborated by oral tradition and by the so-called Oral Law, and they were frequently interpreted in the direction of

* The first section of "A Child of the Ghetto," which opens I. Zangwill's *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, reproduces admirably and inimitably the spirit engendered by this training, albeit in a much later generation than that of the schoolmen of Judaism.

increased stringency. . . . Yet such was the native power of Judaism, such the force of the *non*-legal elements of the religion, such the deeper religious sense of the Rabbis themselves, that the evils of legalism throughout the ages have been less large and important than its excellences. For so long as it was really believed that the Law in its entirety was the exact word of God, so long was it a delightful duty and a blissful sanctification to observe it. The evils of legalism are most conspicuous when its theoretic basis is withdrawn.”* No better defence is wanted for a way of life which exactly supplied the needs of a series of generations who could follow no other road to virtue, in its literal sense as the quality of a man. A far more pertinent question is, what was the *result* of all this instruction? And here we may surely take the evidence of the teachers who imparted it. We go to a headmaster on a Speech Day for an account of the life of his school, and though such an account may be a bit biased and a bit inclined to patriotic enthusiasm, we know that, on the whole, it represents the spirit of the corporation which he governs. So we may go to the headmasters of these Jewish schools for an account of the aim which they fostered, and the spirit which they sought to inculcate. Happily, in the chapters of *Aboth*, to which reference was made above, we have specimens of this kind of Speech Day utterances: contemporary statements

* *Outlines of Liberal Judaism*, London, 1923; pp. 222-23.

by the teachers themselves, in the first and second centuries of the Christian era. Thus, Hillel used to say: "The more *Torah*, the more life; the more schooling, the more wisdom. He who has acquired a good name has acquired it for himself; he who has acquired for himself words of *Torah* has acquired for himself life in the world to come." Rabbi Eleazer, the son of Azarqah, said, many centuries before William of Wykeham: "Where there is no *Torah*, there are no manners." Rabbi Jonathan said: "Whoso fulfils the *Torah* in the midst of poverty shall in the end fulfil it in the midst of wealth"; and Hillel used to say: "He who makes a worldly use of the crown of the *Torah* shall waste away." Rabbi Simeon, anticipating legalism, said: "Be careful to read the *Shema*' and to say the *Amidah*; and when thou prayest regard not thy prayer as a fixed mechanical task, but as an appeal for mercy and grace." And Rabbi Tarphon said: "The day is short, and the work is great, and the labourers are sluggish, and the reward is much, and the Master of the house is urgent. It is not thy duty to complete the work, but neither art thou free to desist from it; if thou hast studied much *Torah*, much reward will be given thee; and faithful is thy Employer to pay thee the reward of thy labour; and know that the grant of reward unto the righteous will be in the time to come." So, there was balm in Gilead for the victims of Vespasian and Hadrian, and a comfort of Jerusalem for those excluded from Ælia Capitolina.

CHAPTER III

PURSUIT AND ESCAPE

§ I. THE RAVELLED THREADS.

OF all ways of reading Jewish history, perhaps the least satisfactory is to try to pick out its threads from the tapestry of general history. Take, for instance, the Dark Ages, which will engage our attention in the present chapter, and look out the word "Jews" in Sir Charles Oman's monograph on that epoch.* The entry in the index reads as follows: "Jews, persecuted by Phocas, 156; persecuted by Visigoths, 143, 223, 232"—a monotonous record. Phocas, rebel and ruler, is described as "a brutal ruffian," who "made his lusts his masters, and soon became the detestation of all his subjects. . . . Instead of hastening to organize new troops, he contented himself with ordering a persecution of the Jews." This was in 608. The three other entries refer to the Visigothic dominion in Spain, 603-711. King Reccared, who died in 601, "though peaceful and tolerant himself, was urged into acts

* *Periods of European History : I. The Dark Ages*, London, 1908.

of persecution, not only against his old co-religionists, the Arians, but against the Jews—a race which had hitherto prospered in Spain.” King Sisibut, 612–20, had a good military record, but was “less happy in the matter of internal government. As befitted a hot supporter of the intolerant Spanish Church, he gave himself up to the promptings of his bishops, and commenced a fierce persecution of the Jews.” King Wamba, 672–80, the last of the Visigoths, was succeeded on the throne by Erwig (to 687) and Egica (to 701), of the former of whom we read, that he “recommenced the cruel persecution of the Jews, which always accompanied the accession of a priest-ridden king to the Spanish throne,” while “Egica’s reign was marked by the last and fiercest persecution of the Jews, in which the Visigothic king and clergy ever indulged. They voted at the sixteenth Council of Toledo (695) that all adult Jews should be seized and sold as slaves, while their children were to be separated from them and given to Christian families to rear in the true faith. Under this wicked law many Hebrews conformed, and still more fled over sea to Africa.” “How odd of God to choose the Jews” are the words of a little poem by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, but, frankly, reading these Jewish references to four and a half centuries of European history, we are disposed to retort, How odd of man to spoil His plan ! Why should Phocas have lost

Constantinople for the pleasure of persecuting Jews? Why should Reccared, Sisibut, Erwig and Egica have interrupted the prosperity of Spain for the sake of gratifying the same lust? And why, we may ask in conclusion, and in confusion of the poet, is Judaism still a living force, while each of these dead kings is but the shadow of a name?

Two motives seem to have been at work. Reccared and even Sisibut were, on the whole, good kings, and they took recourse to Jewish persecution at the instance of their Church. The one "was urged into acts of persecution," though he had a bias to tolerance; the other "gave himself up to the promptings of his bishops." Erwig, too, was "priest-ridden" to that goal. Phocas and Egica were differently moved, and, despite their distance in space and time, they may be considered together. The former suspected the Jews of having betrayed to the Persians some of the towns of Syria, and the crime of Egica's Jewish subjects is said to have been a plot to betray Spain to the Saracens. These explanations take us a little further. The persecution of the Jews in the Dark Ages, which is all that the index mentions, begins to be manifest as a response in various countries of Europe to certain positive facts of Jewish history. We begin to wonder how history would read if Erwig, Egica and the rest were the secondary actors in

the drama, and the Jews were cast for the hero's part: if the stray threads in the tapestry, that is to say, were gathered to a connected pattern. We begin to ask what lay behind the "fierce persecution" by Sisibut and the "cruel persecution" by Erwig, and why the suspicion of treachery, which, after all, never was proved, led the Council of Toledo to adopt the extreme measures of selling adult Jews into slavery and farming out their children to the "faithful." Again, if the suspicion of treachery made Phocas and Egica so violent in 608 and 695, were the Jews against whom each proceeded, not wholly to his own advantage, so despicable and negligible a people? Pagan Rome had destroyed their State, and Christian Rome had sought to destroy their Church, in the second and the succeeding centuries. What was there so vital in this people, that great rulers of soils and souls should turn away from their harvest in the seventh century in order to plough the barren sands? Lastly, when the Jews driven from Visigothic Spain "fled over sea to Africa," what kind of reception did they expect? Did the parcels of Jewry in every country join up in any sense to a connected whole? Was there a pattern astray among the threads?

These questions cannot be answered. They could not be fully answered in a book ten times as large as this. For the Jews of the Dark Ages

were a people without an historian. They had no historian after Josephus—no contemporary annalist on their side—and Josephus was Romanized to Flavius. Thucydides displayed the soul of Hellas in the Attic Greek of the funeral oration, but the “unknown warrior” of Israel’s wars always went unhonoured and unsung. Even Wamba, the Visigothic king, survives his fame in a bishop’s biography, but the Jews whom his dynasty persecuted live as alien heretics and traitors. We note that the English historian, thirteen hundred years after the event, describes Phocas as a “brutal ruffian,” and Egica’s act as a “wicked law.” Presumably, therefore, at the time, the Jews suspect of treachery were condemned by unjust judges, and nearer memories of the conviction of Alfred Dreyfus and the more recent Jewish terror in the Ukraine seem to indicate a continuity of direction in anti-Jewish propaganda. Such charges of treachery, sorted into an independent history of the Jews, might be changed to signs of a higher patriotism. After all, the Moors came to Spain, and the Gothic kingdom went down, despite the enslavement of Spanish Jews; and no military aim was served by the pogroms of the seventh or the twentieth century. We observe, too, that this Council was held in 695, while intermittent Jewish persecutions had been instituted since the reign of good King Reccared almost exactly a hundred years before.

It seems an odd preparation for the loyalty expected from Jewish subjects and enforced by such terrible penalties. "Many Hebrews conformed" to a standard infinitely below their own, but more fled across the sea. Mr. Galsworthy's conflict of "Loyalties" was enacted on a very early stage.

But if the questions cannot be fully answered in the absence of evidence from the other side, and if the unwanted appearances and violent dismissals of Jews, in the annals of religious warfare which form the main record of the Dark Ages, are too disparate and local to be combined to a consecutive history of Jewish influence; if, indeed, that influence was not consecutive, and not even directed from a common centre to like objects in various lands, at least we may keep the whole in mind when we encounter the parts. Noting the negative evidence of the absence of a Jews' advocate, we may remember that, from Ezra downwards, those responsible for framing Jewish policy left temporal things out of account. Unlike the Christian Church of Rome, which took shape in 325, the Jews, whether in exile from Jerusalem in Palestine, or from Palestine in Parthia, kept their State in their schools, and formulated predominantly a religious code. The lack of secular history in the Babylonian Talmud, which was completed in the fifth century, is a characteristic which would surprise us if we did

not realize this preoccupation of its compilers. Legend is there, and folk-lore, and lore of mathematics and kindred sciences, but there is no Jewish history as such, and as the term is correctly understood by students of empires and nations, of dynasties, ministers, and wars. Yet the Jews had a history all the time. They came and went, in and out, and up and down the centuries and the shores. They brought to the counsels of the Gentiles the warning, the mystery, the awe, sometimes styptic, of their unchanging and fast-held Law. Where they were "sold as slaves," it is likely that they had testified as libertarians; when their persecution was "fierce," so, too, may have been their iconoclasm. It is for what they brought, not received, that the history of the Jews is significant; their activity, not their passivity, their doings, not their sufferings, form their contribution to the civilization nominally Roman till 1806. These items of "Jews, persecuted," in historians' indexes from the Dark Ages to modern times are inadequate to the motives of the princes who went on ordering fresh persecutions. Was it all zeal for the true faith? If so, why did truth not prevail? Was it fear, or hate, or vulgar prejudice, or a base alloy of the three qualities? If so, why invoke the name of Jesus? And if so, again, what elements in Judaism or the Jews made them so formidable and detestable to intolerant and decadent neigh-

bours? The books of the Jews are wanting which might unravel these threads in the pomp of European history. For lack of them, the utmost that can be attempted is to establish a few contacts which were not submerged in Hebrew blood.

§ 2. EMPEROR, SAINT, AND PROPHET.

Beth-ther fell in 135, and Hadrian reigned in Rome till 138, when he was succeeded by Antoninus Pius, who restored some of the privileges of the Jews. He was succeeded in turn by Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic philosopher-Emperor, who reigned from 161 to 180; and in his library, turned to a court, and at his court, turned to a camp, we may pause on the eve of the invasions which were to overwhelm Rome. "Marcus to himself" is the title of his book, commonly known as *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, which is said to be "to pagan religion what Thomas à Kempis is to Christianity."* But is it only to pagan religion? All the authorities agree with the judgment of Gibbon, that the life of Marcus Aurelius "was the noblest commentary on the precepts of Zeno," who, after all, owed something to the East. Many would even agree with Gibbon's further contention that, "if a man

* Dr. R. W. Livingstone, *The Mission of Greece*, Oxford, 1928; p. 79.

were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom." But where was this wisdom sought? Rome in that century, though pagan, was religious, and Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher among kings, was widely hospitable to foreign as well as to native deities. "A multitude of foreign priests," writes Walter Pater in *Marius the Epicurean*, "had been welcomed to Rome with their various peculiar religious rites," and among them, of course, were Jews. We are aware of what Ammianus Marcellinus, in his Latin history in the fourth century, reported that Marcus Aurelius had said about the Jews. Crossing Palestine to Egypt in 176, he exclaimed, writes Marcellinus, at the clamour and squalor of its inhabitants: "O Marcomanni, O Quadi, O Sarmatæ, tandem alios vobis inertiores inveni!" At last he had struck a population more noisome than the border tribes. But the commander in his camp was not the philosopher in his study, and Marcus did not commit this reflection "to himself." It may or may not be authentic, as recorded two hundred years after, but it affects the value of his thoughts as little as his persecution

of the Christians, which Matthew Arnold has so lucidly explained away. Far more significant for his thought is the fact that Jehuda, Prince and Rabbi (see Ch. II., § 5), was contemporary with Marcus Aurelius, and, further, the conjecture that the two men actually met. There is an Antoninus in the Talmud who entertains the great Rabbi imperially, and converses with him on the highest things, and history, playing with the legend, likes to imagine that the *Meditations* of Marcus, like the Messianic eclogue of Virgil, owed a part of its inspiration to Jewish teaching. The personal intercourse of the two sages must be left dubious, but there is no dubiety in the fact that the following passages occur in the Emperor's book of so-called "pagan" religion:

"Thou hast been a citizen in this great city: what matter whether for five years or three, for that which conformeth to law is just to all? Therefore, where is the hardship, if no tyrant, no unjust judge, sendeth thee hence, but nature, who appointed thy coming, as when an actor is dismissed by the prætor who employed him? Thou sayest, But I have not completed the five acts, but three only of them! True, but in human life three acts may be the whole play. The duration of the play is in his hands who made it. Thou causest neither the beginning nor the end. Depart thou satisfied, for he who dismisses thee is satisfied."

Rabbi Tarphon said much the same in the same epoch (see Ch. II., *fin.*) Again:

“All things pass away soon, as a tale that is told, and oblivion covers them. This I have said of those who shone a little while in a wondrous way. As for the rest, their breath goeth out of their body, and no one speaketh of them more. And, in conclusion of the matter, what is even the longer remembrance? All is vanity.”

And again:

“All that is best for thee, O Universe, is best for me also. Nothing for me cometh too soon or too late, which cometh in thy due time. To me, O Nature, all is fruit that thy seasons bear. From thee all things come, in thee all things are, to thee all things return. The poet says, ‘Dear city of Cecrops’; canst thou not say, ‘Dear city of God’?”

The resemblances in the first of these are obvious. For the second we may refer to Psalm xxxi. 15 (“My times are in thy hand”), among familiar passages of Holy Writ; and we wonder, at the close of our pause with the most spiritual mind in pagan Rome, if his rarely sympathetic imagination may not have caught from foreign priests in his capital a dim perception of the new and deeper meaning which had grown into a Jew’s love for Jerusalem.

We pass from Marcus to Jerome, from a philosopher to a saint, though in saintliness of disposition the pagan was not second to the Christian. Jerome's dates are 337-420, and he is said to have completed his translation of the canonical books of the Old Testament (with the exception of the Psalter) from the original Hebrew into Latin in 410, the year in which Alaric sacked Rome. Thus his Vulgate has been finely called "the great legacy of the old world to the middle ages, of the dying Empire of Rome to the ever-living Kingdom of Christ."* We need not dwell on that aspect, save to note that Jerome's recourse to the Hebrew text, instead of to the Greek version of it by the LXX, which had served earlier Latin translators, effected a revolution in method, which was not repeated till the time of Luther. And, in each age, in the early fifth as in the early sixteenth century, it was to the hated Jews that the reformers went for direction; in each age, too, though in the latter Johann Reuchlin formed an honourable exception, hate overbore gratitude and almost overbore counsel. We shall come to the Jewish contact with the Reformation. Here, at its earlier analogue, we should note that the birth of Jerome occurred in the year (337) of the death of the Emperor Constantine, who had adopted Christianity as the State religion. It is

* W. E. Plater and H. J. White, *Grammar of the Vulgate*, Oxford, 1926; p. 135.

pertinent, too, to Jerome's Jewish studies, eleven hundred years before Reuchlin's, to note that the seats of Jewish learning, transferred from Jerusalem to smaller places in Palestine after 135, were now removed out of Palestine altogether, and that the Christianization of Rome contributed largely to the process of the growth of Jewish consciousness in the Diaspora, inevitable after Jerusalem had been expunged from the map of the Empire. The big Jewish population in Babylonia took the lead in learning and law-giving. Mar Samuel's school at Nehardea and the great Rab's at Sura were reinforced by a third at Pumbeditha, and these and others attracted the activities of *Amoraim*, or Mishnaic commentators. Ashi, master at Sura from 375 to 427, laid the lines of the Babylonian Talmud, which was completed not long before the birth of Mohammed, whose religion of Islam was to establish its own contact with Judaism.

Accordingly, it was not at the prime of the Jewish schoolmen in Palestine that Jerome, a son of Christian parents, sought instruction in the Hebrew language. He it was, as we saw in the last chapter, who composed from personal observation that bitter, sad traveller's letter: *Videas in die quo capta est a Romanis et diruta Jerusalem* ("On the day when Jerusalem was taken and destroyed by the Romans, you may see") Jews drying their tears, *in corporibus et in habitu suo iram*

Domini demonstrantes, proving the wrath of God in their persons and in their habit ; and he eagerly collected and reported any sign of such “wrath.” Again and again he condemned a Jewish custom or a reputed Jewish act, and he repeatedly alleged of the “Eighteen Blessings” that they conveyed an insult to Christianity. Jerome, therefore, was no humane Reuchlin, taught by Pico della Mirandola at Florence to seek Hebrew wisdom concurrently with Greek, when he and other Church Fathers sharpened by their invective the harsh measures of Theodosius I. and II. He acknowledged an “unspeakable hatred” of the Jews. He hated them even when he learned from them. Translating *Mishna* correctly as *deuterosis* (repetition), he said in one of his letters: “I listened at Lydd to one of the Hebrews, whom they call a wise man and a *deuterist*, telling a fable of this kind.” Again, of Hillel he said: “By his traditions and *deuteroses* he dissipated and stained the teachings of the Law”; and, again: “Contemning the Law of God, in accordance with their traditions, which they call *deuteroses*”; and, once more, of “the old wives’ tales of the Pharisees, . . . many are so foul (*turpia*) that I should blush to repeat them.” It was not an amiable attitude in which to approach the study of the oral interpretation of *Torah*, yet we know that learned Jews of Lydd visited him secretly in his cell, in order to coach him in Hebrew and to train him in the

meaning of the sacred text. Intercourse was not easy. Perhaps the Rabbis were as reluctant to come as Jerome was anxious not to be seen with them, and it would be interesting to know what Bar-Chanina, whose name has come down to us, thought of his eminent pupil's views. But all the records, as usual, are on the other side. Still, the contact took place, and, though Jerome minimized his obligations, and was more ready to find fables and fine-spinning than wholesome argument and yarn, scholars agree that his competence in translation and commentary was largely based on the labours of his Jewish predecessors and instructors, many of whose interpretations he adopted without acknowledging the source. It is obvious that every Bible student is to that extent a pupil of the Jews, but it is not so commonly perceived that the reformation of Biblical studies, which Jerome effected in the fifth century, depended, like Luther's in the sixteenth, on Hebrew learning as well as on the Book, and that "the great legacy of the old world to the middle ages" could not have been transmitted in its completeness without Jerome's Jewish teachers.

We must dwell more briefly with Mohammed. The relations between Judaism and Islam, which derived its sanction from Abraham, and thus deliberately went back beyond both Jesus and Moses, were at first extraordinarily close, and

form a fascinating chapter in the history of religions. But that chapter does not directly touch our topic of the Jewish contribution to the civilization of the Christian era. Mohammed made ample use of Judaism, but he failed to convert the Jews, and, when Islam had driven the Jews out of Arabia, the material conquests, vast as they were, of the daughter-religion did not win the spiritual goal of matricide. Judaism survived the advent of Islam, as it survived that of Christianity, though it fought in both instances with one arm tied behind its back. For the history of religions seems to show that successful propaganda must be directed from a source of temporal power, and that it was therefore a maimed religion which placed its sole reliance on the *Torah*. Christianity and Islam were imposed on the multitudes who ignored Judaism by the Roman Empire and the sword of the Prophet, as well as by Jesus and Mohammed; and while full tribute is paid to the personality of Jesus and the fanaticism of Mohammed, in whose names the conversions were wrought, a passing tribute is due likewise to the dispossessed and one-armed fighter, who, giving the best of his spiritual endowment, did not bend to either increasing power. Trying as we may to reconstruct a picture of the sixth century, with Christianity and Islam moving towards 637, when Heraclius lost Jerusalem within ten years after recapturing it

from the Persians, we cannot but see how this unbendingness of the Jews became a main count in their common indictment by every armed force sweeping to triumph. The very absence of temporalities enhanced the impression of arrogance produced by the spectacle of a "power," which relied on the spirit alone. What mattered this "comfort of Jerusalem" behind the high fence of an etiolated Law, when Jerusalem herself was the objective of religions marching with troops? The identity of Jerusalem as a military objective with the Messianic city of the Jews increased the resentment of the victors at this spoliation by an unarmed foe. The sense of possession, dearly bought, was outraged by the pretension to a perpetual tenure. Added to this subconscious jealousy, which caused Christian and Moslem to spurn the Jew, was the physical fear, which Roman, Persian and Arab alike felt of the interest of the Jews. For these, too, were aiming at Jerusalem, and who could say what weapons they would use if the cause of their spiritual home clashed with that of their national dwelling-place? They turned to Jerusalem in their prayers, they were laid towards Jerusalem in their graves; would not their loyalty to Jerusalem incline their influence to the stronger side? A generation, however superior in civilized feeling, which has seen the passions of war, will be aware how suspicion of this kind grows by the rumours

which it feeds upon, till full-grown fear expresses itself in cruelty. We may leave aside the more obvious causes, traceable in the strangeness of the Jews who worshipped apart, married apart, and ate apart. These factors, though concomitant, would not wholly account for the detestation of the Jews by all alike: by subjects of the philosopher who had consulted their wisdom, by disciples of the saint who had come to them for learning, by followers of the prophet who sought to conciliate their good-will. It was founded, if we read the signs aright, chiefly on jealousy and fear, on a jealousy of their spiritual affection and a fear of their temporal loyalty. Against infidels so arrogant and traitors so vile no measure of persecution was too severe, and the common people's loathing for the race, which, in a legend that grew, was held answerable for the tragedy of the Crucifixion, acquired license, as it were, from the Jerusalem-complex of their rulers.

This reading of the facts may be submitted in correction of Gibbon's partial view, derived directly from Roman writers, that the "sullen obstinacy" of the Jews marked them out as "a distinct species of men, who boldly professed, or who faintly disguised, their implacable hatred to the rest of human-kind." The *Torah* and the fence with which they surrounded it had to do duty for land as well as Law: it had to supply the territorial base from which the armies of

other creeds set out to capture Jerusalem. To-day, at last, we may indulge the fancy that the league of creeds, secured by the League of Nations, will avail to dissolve the old complex in a purpose jointly achieved, in which Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, to name them in the order of their origin, will have resigned their destructive will to power.

§ 3. COMMERCIAL CONTACTS.

Another cause of hate in this age, or, rather, of its sequel in persecution, has been diagnosed as commercial jealousy.* It happened from the sixth century that various circumstances combined to give Jews an opportunity of developing a faculty for trade. It was an acquired, not a native faculty; for, though the disputations of the schoolmen sharpened the wits of their pupils, and though keen wits may be applied to other than forensic uses, yet we must be careful in this context not to ascribe to the Jews of the sixth century qualities which they displayed in the Middle Ages. Originally they were an agricultural people. Their Sabbath, festivals, holidays and poor law, all rested on an agricultural foundation, and the rural utopia which passed into the heritage of modern literature is essentially a Hebrew vision. Without multiply-

* By George Finlay, the historian of Greece. See Note 5.

ing the evidence, which will be familiar to every reader of the Old Testament, we may be content with two or three quotations. "He that tilleth his land shall be satisfied with bread," said the author of Proverbs (xii. 11), and the writer of Ecclesiastes declared: "The profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field" (v. 9). "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land," cried the prophet Jeremiah (xxxii. 15), and Josephus, answering Apion, said that the Jews did not inhabit a maritime country, nor take delight in merchandise, but having a fruitful country for their habitation, they took pains to cultivate it.

So far we are on safe ground: The king himself was served by the field, and the majority of the Jews in Judæa followed peacefully the royal example. Complications begin to arise when we see that the majority of Jews were found less and less in Judæa. They emigrated by compulsion, and they emigrated of their own accord, and both classes of emigrants were drafted, in their own despite, into occupations other than of the soil. First of all, there were the repeated conquests, followed by the sale of Jews into slavery. No exact figures are available, but they ran into thousands upon thousands, and, as slaves in all parts of the Roman world, they necessarily learned many trades, and set themselves to become such apt pupils that they were given

responsibility, promotion, and even liberty. Naturally, when release was won—and there were very few Jewish slaves in the sixth century—they maintained themselves by the faculties which they had acquired, and they continued in the cities to forget the lost freedom of the fields. But there was also a large voluntary emigration of the surplus population from Judæa, which, for various causes, tended to drift into towns. Reports from the Diaspora were not favourable to an increase of dependents on the land; the new trades acquired in exile seemed promising and attractive, and, moreover, when a Jew had to quit Palestine, he felt safer in a city from which he could get away, and safest of all in a city on the coast, from which he could get away quickest.

Thus, the harsh experience of the Jews drove them from agriculture to commerce, and their keen wits, trained in disputation, were employed in selling and buying, and in bargaining for a profit on each transaction. As by a trick of a cloud across the sun, we see the shadow of Shylock creeping over the destiny of the people, which nursed the hope of the Messiah, and from which saints and prophets sought instruction. And the shadow crept very quickly up the sky. The unhappy and ill-used people were not less faithful to their mission, they clung not less closely to their heritage, though their schools were constantly broken up, and their religious centre was

shifted; but they could not escape their physical destiny. We read of their wineshops and bazaars in many cities of the Empire, and of their habit, noted by St. Jerome among others, of mixing water with their wine. We hear of them in Naples and Marseilles, in Egypt, Syria, and Spain. We find them hawking Christian emblems at church doors, despite their inhibition from that traffic. We meet them as bankers; we meet them, too, as slave-dealers: they had learned the tricks of that trade, to which no suspicion of moral stigma then attached, by bitter experience in many countries, and there is no doubt that they found it lucrative. We omit from this survey the professional class among the Jews, which was by no means inconsiderable. They became manufacturers, physicians, soldiers, lawyers, men of science, and the like. But it is clear that about this time we begin to hear more and more of commercial dealings by the Jews: of certain evils attendant on them; of the increasing numbers who were engaged in them, and of the avarice which marked their transactions. This charge of greed—the Shylock charge—is new, and if we are correct in our contention, that it was the fate and not the choice of Jews to exchange the ploughshare for the ledger, and to fill the student's bower with gold, it is worth while to inquire how it happened, that, having made this harsh and forced exchange, they

aroused a commercial jealousy which was added to the causes of persecution.

For, first of all, trade was not their *métier*. They had the brains for it, and they acquired the aptitude, but they were not bred to it, as were the Greeks, who had been seafarers throughout their history, familiar with the Mediterranean ports. The Greeks beat the Phœnicians on that sea-board, and extended their connections afar. But the Jews, it has been noted, are never mentioned in pagan literature as a mercantile folk. Their call to commerce came later, when the enterprise of Greece began to fail, and when urban habits and convenience had overlaid the older rural tastes. Secondly, no one held out to them a friendly hand. They were comparatively newcomers in commerce, slipping into the thinning ranks by virtue chiefly of their neutrality among the armed and landed nations of the day, and they were left in frozen isolation. It does not seem that the Jews rejected friendship, or refused to pass the time of day with their clients. It really seems, from the evidence available, which, as always, comes from non-Jewish sources, that, except in order to convert them, which was the one kindly office that they declined, no one was encouraged to seek intercourse with them. They were covered with a crust of hate, which had the odd commercial advantage of securing them from the suspicion of giving or taking

favours. They were handicapped from the start. Their rivals were against them; their customers were against them; they had against them their own well-founded fear of the danger attaching to neutrals at any threat of international troubles, and they had against them a series of enactments designed to oppress them in their faith. It was surely very hard for them to make good, with the Church constantly at their heels to trip or trap them into apostasy. The letters of Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), who set the lines of papal policy towards Judaism, are full of evidence to this effect: he authorizes baptismal gifts to Jews too poor to buy a coat, and the conversionist value of Jewish poverty occurs repeatedly in the literature of the age. Passing from the Church to the State—and, after all, the passage was very narrow—we find a like intention. There were laws, more or less rigorously enforced according to the disposition of the reigning Emperor, forbidding Jews to own Christian slaves, or pagan slaves who had adopted Christianity. There were laws excluding them from the army, and from other liberal professions, which, while they must have turned many Jews to Christianity, turned more perforce to trade. And, then, having turned them to a source of livelihood which was not their free choice, the enlightened legislature proceeded to corrupt them by putting obstacles in their path. It is hardly too much to

say that the Shylock-monster of the Middle Ages was created by the Church-Empire of earlier centuries, when these commercial contacts were first established; and, lest we should be suspect of exaggeration, we may say it in the words of Dr. Juster, the historian of the Jews under Roman rule, whose every paragraph, and almost every sentence, is supported by ample authority. "Christianity," he writes, at the conclusion of his learned treatise, "commenced to sap and tire Jewish energy, in order to vex the spirit of the Jew. He had no more tranquillity within the Empire. And when the policy of persecution became constant, the Jews began to quit the Empire, for the precarious hospitality of any barbarian king. This is the reason why they were most numerous in new kingdoms. But here, too, intolerance followed them, or quickly rejoined them. Instinctively aiming at ethnic vitality, they now established themselves close to the frontiers. . . . But these frontier-Jewries, without a fixed habitation, and almost nomad, bring us close to the history of the Middle Ages."*

§ 4. THE WAY OF ESCAPE.

Before passing to that history in the next chapter, we may try to complete our picture of the other side—of the side not represented in law

* *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain : leur Condition juridique, économique et sociale*, vol. ii., pp. 325-26.

and statute—by a brief survey of what may be called the home-industry of the Jews in this long epoch. A man of genius, if his surroundings are uncongenial—and, psychologically, this experience is not rare—can lift himself out of them into the world of his imagination. He escapes in its purer atmosphere from the obstructions and unhappiness of his lot. And what is true of an individual is true likewise of a people. The Jews were not as unhappy as they might seem. They, too, found compensation in their own resources, and followed a way of escape from the real into the unreal, which became their truer reality. It has been finely said* that “Boccaccio might be called the escape from Dante. The dreamer awakes, and tastes the air, and sees the colours of life, and feels the delight of moving his limbs.” Remembering this dictum, we may say that the Jews reversed the process, and found in a Dante an escape from a Boccaccio, in their *Torah* a retreat from men’s laws, in the other-world a refuge from this world. They quitted waking for their dream of the Messiah, and in the freedom of the dreamland of their spiritual being they tasted the air, and saw the colours, and moved at liberty. ‘They *had* to find a way of escape from the insupportable tyranny of humankind. “À inquiéter l’esprit du Juif,” to vex the

* By Sir Walter Raleigh, *Some Authors*, Oxford, 1923; p. 3.

spirit of the Jew, history reveals as the key to Christian practice. "Il n'y avait plus de tranquillité dans l'Empire," there was nowhere rest for the sole of his foot, is its revelation of the intention of the Roman State; and the vexed spirit of the wandering Jew was only not crushed by the broken flesh, because it lived an independent life, above and away from persecution. This very independence of the spirit, which the slings and arrows would not reach, increased the fierceness of the persecutors. As the Jews had to buy their tears at the Wailing Wall, so they had to stifle their prayers at the point of death.* Yet the spirit triumphed over the flesh, and the intensive cultivation of *Torah* proved a way of salvation and escape.

How are we to display the smooth without disguising the rough of that way? How illuminate its disciplinary value without deepening the shadows that it cast? How modify the conclusion to its narrowness without exaggerating the breadth of its specification? We may go back, in the first instance, to *Pirke Aboth*, or the Chapters of the Fathers, from the fourth division of the *Mishnah*, which was compiled, as we saw, by the great Rabbi, out of the traditions of the Oral Law, about A.D. 200. Towards the end of that tractate we read what may be called the fourteen ages of a Hebrew man:

* See p. 81, *supra*.

“ ‘At five years the age is reached for the study of the Scriptures, at ten for the study of the *Mishnah*, at thirteen for the fulfilment of the commandments, at fifteen for the study of the Talmud, at eighteen for marriage, at twenty for seeking a livelihood, at thirty for entering into one’s full strength, at forty for understanding, at fifty for counsel, at sixty a man attains old age, at seventy the hoary head, at eighty the gift of special strength [Ps. xc. 10], at ninety he bends beneath the weight of years, at a hundred he is as if already dead, and had passed away from the world.’ Ben Bag-Bag, in an aphorism next reported, points the moral: ‘Turn it [the *Torah*], and turn it over again, for everything is in it, and contemplate it, and wax grey and old over it, and stir not from it, for thou canst have no better rule than this.’ Ben He-He said, ‘According to the labour is the reward.’ ”

Here we have the full life of the pious Jew, with its breadth and smoothness and discipline, resuming in an ample embrace the foe of mankind fleeing from persecution. There was room there and verge for liberty and love and duty and reward, and an entire man’s life without oppression or prohibition or contempt. By its bottleneck approach through the channel of the *Torah*, it opened out into terraced views, which rose to the vision of the Messiah. “I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and,

though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming." So ran the twelfth of the thirteen Articles of the Jewish Creed, as formulated by Maimonides, who guided men in the twelfth century in the way of life which his fathers had opened before him. They had waited daily for the Messiah, those Jews of the Dark Ages of secular history, and the wide folds of their praying-shawls had wrapped them up in a dream remote from the world of men. *Die Welt wird Traum, der Traum wird Welt*: "The dreamer awakes," as we have read, "and tastes the air, and sees the colours of life, and feels the delight of moving his limbs." On the other side of the barrier of *Torah* were the dreaded "customs of the Gentiles," the *Hukoth ha-Goyim* of the oppressors and of the nations that knew not the Law. But what was there worth having, we must ask, on the hither side? When he had folded his praying-shawl around him, and bound the sign upon his hand, and laid the frontlets between his eyes, according to the observance of the *Tallith* (Deut. xxii. 12 and Num. xv. 38) and the *Tefillin* (Deut. vi. 8), when he had sanctified the doorposts of his house, according to the observance of the *Mezuzah* (Deut. vi. 9), when he had fulfilled in every particular, and all day long, and every day, throughout the fourteen ages of man, the utmost requirements of *Torah*, stretched by the Oral Law, as codified in the *Mishnah*, to the utmost

capacity of its obligations, what was the gain of the Jew, withdrawn from his world into a dream, and re-making his dream into a world? We shall presently itemize the reply, in the varied contribution of the Jews to the civilization of the Christian era, which they entered under so heavy a handicap. Here we may anticipate in five words the essential feature of the contribution, and describe it, in the words of the poet, as "pure religion breathing household laws." Dilution of this description would not add to it, but if we are to amplify it at all we would say that the Jew gained, first, a disposition to see things catholically. He gained utopia in space, and eternity in time. For to wait daily on a divine event, and always to act as if it were at hand, is surely to conquer time, as always to move in ideal surroundings is a conquest of space. Not without cause Francis Bacon, writing his *New Atlantis* in the seventeenth century, put the exposition of its constitution into the mouth of "a Jew, and circumcised." He had his vision of the Messiah, "but yet setting aside these Jewish dreams, the man was a wise man, and learned, and of great policy, and excellently seen in the laws and customs of that nation" (of Bensalem). A queer guide to social reform, it would seem, within thirty years of *The Merchant of Venice*; but which was more genuinely a Jew—Bacon's Joabin or Shakespeare's Shylock? the utopian or the usurer?

the Jew who dreamed or the Jew who dealt? The gain of this faculty of vision, to which we shall come back, lent the distance to Heine's lyre, and the leap to Spinoza's thought, the architectonic to Disraeli's statecraft, and perhaps the boldness to Rothschild's speculation. We remember, too, that Heine was a German in Paris, Spinoza a Portuguese in Amsterdam, Disraeli an Englishman of Southern origin, and that Rothschild colonized Europe.

Secondly, we should say that the Jew derived from his inner experience an immense store of optimism and patience. A *pogrom*, of course, is a *pogrom*, whether you are an optimist or the reverse; but your chance of surviving it and starting again, the tone of your letters to friends abroad, and, consequently, the prospect of a favourable answer, are all affected by your power of resilience to the buffets of fate; and the Jew's will to survive may be traced to his inextricably implanted belief in the divine promise of a better day to come. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," ran the familiar words of the *Shema*, the pivotal prayer of the Hebrew liturgy; and Sir William Bragg, President in 1928 of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, declared in his Presidential Address that these terms, "in their comprehensiveness, include all the aspirations of the searcher after knowledge."

The Jew did not merely recite them—he felt them; and, feeling them intensely, his aspiration became a present belief. The optimist is patient because he knows that truth and justice will prevail; and, secure in the world where dreams come true, he ignores the worst terror of reality.

And, lastly, in this context, the Messianic tenets of Judaism were gradually projected from a mortal kingdom into the reign of the moral law of righteousness. This transformation was neither general nor complete. The restoration of Zion might still be interpreted in its literal sense as a renewal of temporal power in Palestine. In many places it is so interpreted today. But as the years and centuries went on, the idea imperceptibly lost its grosser vestment of politics and became more purely ethereal. The universalism was contained in the nationalism, and it was rather vision than disillusion which found a stronger hold in the longer view. This process, even now in evolution, was quickened by the Reform movement in Judaism, which dates effectively only from the close of the eighteenth century, and obviously it was connected with the contemporary social emancipation of the Jews. We shall not be anticipating those events if we bring to our study of the Dark Ages, irradiated for the Jews by their inward light, the perception drawn from after-history of the ethical value of their “household laws,” then the salient

feature of the escape which the *Torah* provided from the world. For though in many instances, no doubt, those laws—the legalism, as men saw them—became in themselves an end, and not always a spiritual end, to religious exercises, though they are not without reproach in some respects, whether considered in their effects on Jewish consciousness or in their effects on the nations' attitude towards the Jews, yet they served as the breath of a pure religion. The moral law, universalism, internationalism: human thought would be poorer without these ideas, which are more Jewish than Greek or Roman. The Jews prayed too long and too loud, too regularly, too mechanically in places. But they prayed themselves into a mood what was not attainable by other peoples. The very isolation in which they performed their hardly tolerated offices as intellectual and commercial intermediaries, and which, comforted by Zion, they flooded with colour and light, protected those ideas from decay, and from the contamination as well as from the stimulation derived from playground and battlefield. The ideas were kept snug in cold storage, till the nations turned to them for counsel.

§ 5. SAADIAH.

We write of the Dark Ages and the Middle Ages as convenient divisions of historical time, but the dial of the Jews was different from that

of the Gentiles. They turned their back on the Dark Ages and kindled their domestic lights; and their Middle Ages extended to the eighteenth century. Secular chronologists note that, when Charlemagne was King of the Franks (768-814) and Haroun al-Raschid was Caliph of Bagdad (786-809), Isaac, a Jew, was a member of the embassy sent by the former to the latter. Properly they infer from this record the decent status of the Jews under the Carolingian kings in Europe and the Abbaside caliphs in the East: more than eleven hundred years were to elapse before a Jew, named Isaacs, was sent as viceroy from England to India. But the real significance to Jewish history of the eighth to tenth centuries of the Christian era does not reside in the ebb and flow, or the rapid rise of the tide, of hate and jealousy of the Jews. The great winds of policy and arms blew across empires and kingdoms, bringing the fortune of war now to one monarch, now to another, who fought under the ensign of his God, now to a stronghold of despotism, now to the storm-troops of the invader; and, like driftwood on the sea, little packets of casually assorted Jews were stranded on an inhospitable shore, where they had to fend as best they could for themselves. Secular power was never theirs, though at moments and in places they rose to eminence, and even the principles of power must have been comparatively indifferent to these

scattered parcels of a people, mostly excluded from professional life, and living always under the threat of persecution or expulsion. Yet one imagines, knowing the mind of this people, that they would not let their "large discourse fust unused," but would set up, independently of secular affairs, power-stations and principles of their own. These are found, according to expectation, in the country of their ancient exile, Babylonia, where, after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the distribution of its schools, a religious centre for Judaism was re-established. In the fifth century the Babylonian Talmud was drafted in its final form; in Babylon, an Exilarch, or Prince of the Captivity (*Resh-Gelutha*), acted as lay head of the shadow-State, while *Geonim* (*Gaon*=Excellence), as heirs of the Elders, continued the Rabbinical tradition at the head of the two great academies at Sura and Pumbeditha. We need not dilute this narrative with the confused history of the relations between Gaonic and Exilarchic leaders. They quarrelled, as Church and State will, and sometimes one, sometimes the other, was in the ascendant. The point is, that the Jewish heart was beating regularly and fully, although the hands might not hold worldly goods and the feet slipped from alien shores.

The spread of Islam, marked by the establishment of a Babylonian caliphate in 651 and of

a Spanish in 711, in many respects quickened Jewish influence, and it is probably correct to associate an important Jewish movement in the middle of the eighth century with the spirit of unrest and inquiry which Mohammed's doctrine and conquests had stirred. There is a Hebrew word, *karah*, to read, with which the Koran is associated, and thence are derived the terms Karaism and Karaites, to denote the tenets and the followers of a certain Anan, who was said to have been disappointed, about 760, in his expectation of the reversion of the rank of Exilarch. Why he did not get it does not matter; what matters is the fact that he started a rival court, and had to be deposed by the reigning Caliph. Thereupon he conspired at Bagdad with Mohammedan jurists to start, not a new Exilarchate, but a new Gaonate—in other words, to reform Traditional Judaism. He and his disciples (for we may pass from Anan to the sect which he founded) put Bagdad in opposition to Babylonia: the rich Jews, mostly speaking Arabic, of the great commercial city, in opposition to the Aramaic-speaking Jews of Babylon, who were chiefly engaged in agriculture and industry. By the time that the Rabbanites, as they came to be called, had banded themselves against the Karaites, the difference was clearly defined between disciples of the Geonim, who remained faithful to the Talmud, and disciples of Karaism,

who professed to go back to and rely upon the authority of the Bible alone. In one aspect Karaism looked back to the teachings of the Sadducees, which had likewise appealed to a wealthy minority; in another, it looked forward to the Protestant Reformation. For Anan's principle or watchword was, if we may parody Carlyle, "Close your Talmud and open your Bible!" Search diligently the Scriptures, was his injunction; and, though he confused his followers by warning them not to lean on his opinion, but to form each his own, thus multiplying counsel without simplifying conduct, and though a literal break with tradition broke observance as well, since a certain amount of case-law is indispensable for the interpretation of statute-law, yet Karaism, which has never quite died out, performed a useful function in Judaism. It introduced into Bible studies the sciences of grammar and philology; or, more exactly, since scholars differ as to the degree in which the Karaites were innovators, it is probably correct to say that their rejection of allegory and inference, and their astringent method with the verbal text, gave a stimulus to such cultivation of those studies as was already attempted in the Rabbinical schools. Short-lived, extreme in some respects, and unpractical in others, as the Karaite sect proved in the actual history of Judaism, it represented a Protestant or reform idea, which,

leaving Anan far behind, was to find its way into the main stream of that history. To find its way back, we may even say. For at the root of the matter was the principle of the freedom of learning, which the Pharisees, however well inspired, and we have tried to do justice to their high aim, drew away from that contact with Greek philosophy which Philo had established in Alexandria. But Hellenism now was returning to the East. Mohammedans had translated Aristotle into Arabic, and in Babylonia, Egypt, Spain, and elsewhere learned Jews lived at peace under the Caliphates. So the ultimate question became, not one of Karaites versus Rabbanites: that was not very difficult to settle; it became one of a renaissance of Greek learning several centuries before the Renaissance, and this question was decided affirmatively. True, it was to be a furtive kind of renaissance: the Greek books were to be kept in Eastern dress till the West should be prepared to rehabilitate them. But Jewish candles were alight in the Dark Ages, and were protected by the *Torah* from the gusts of secular ambition.

Thus, Saadiah (882-942), who became Gaon of Sura in 928, and who, as the leading Rabbanite of his day, wrote a refutation of Anan's heresy, (1) may almost be said to have learned how to read the Bible from the Karaites, and (2) reopened the Jewish door to Hellenic studies.

It is correct, accordingly, to claim historical importance for Saadiah, not only because of his contributions to Jewish learning, but also on wider grounds. He ranks as the spiritual father of the line of philosophers, from Avicbron in the eleventh to Spinoza in the seventeenth century, who "introduced a leaven of Jewish outlook into the speculations of the non-Jewish world,"* and his method of Biblical exegesis, which he derived directly from the denounced sect, gave a new direction to the mind of Europe, and found final expression in the Reformation. He was appreciated as highly by his own people in the eleventh century as in the twentieth, and was called by a title which reminds us of Dante's epithet for Aristotle, "the master of all knowledge." Chief among Saadiah's works was his Arabic translation of the Hebrew text of the Bible, which is comparable, in its value to the heirs of Hispano-Arabian culture with Jerome's Latin Vulgate. His lexicographical, grammatical and exegetic labours were pioneering in their kind, and his *Responsa*, a common form of Gaonic compositions, threw new light on many problems presented to him. But by far his most famous book, written in Bagdad in 933, is the " (Philosophic) Doctrines and (Religious) Beliefs ": in Arabic, *Amanet wa'l*

* See a valuable essay on Saadiah by Mr. M. Simon, in *Aspects of the Hebrew Genius*, edited by Leon Simon, London, 1910. Later and fuller is *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works*, by Henry Malter, Ph.D., Philadelphia, 1921.

P'tákadat; in Hebrew, into which it was translated in 1186, *Emunoth v' De'oth*. We shall not attempt to analyze the contents of the introduction and ten sections of this learned treatise; still less to evaluate it in its own class. We might repeat, from a popular handbook, that Saadiah was "a rationalist thinker upon an orthodox basis, or an orthodox theologian given to rationalism," and that "Mohammedan dogmatics supplied him with method and orientation."* But these epithets do not tell us much. We may conclude that Saadiah aimed, on a larger scale and for a wider public than Philo, at a synthesis between the tradition of the Hebrews and the reason of the Greeks, and that he availed himself in this quest of the exegetic method taught by Islam to the Karaites. We have still to try to grasp the range and depth of Saadiah's reform, and the novelty in the Talmudic schools of his mapping and survey of the Bible. The jealous scholarship of this champion of the Rabbanites, who yet knew the meaning of the proverb, *fas est et ab hoste doceri*, and who, turning the weapons of the Karaites on themselves, prised open sealed fountains of knowledge, reminds us more of Eràsmus than of Hillel, and was set on the forward way. His religious philosophy is superseded, but his works survive

* See *A History of the Jewish People*, by M. L. Margolis and A. Marx, Philadelphia, 1927; p. 372.

in their influence, alike on his own times and on the future. He stands as a type—perhaps not the supreme type, but anyhow a type—of the product of Jewish schools, in which the Jews, dispossessed of temporalities, expatiated freely in an ideal world, while holding forces in leash which the real world would presently require. When Saadia died, the first millennium of the Christian era was drawing to its close. Efforts had been made in every one of the ten centuries to break the stiff neck of the Jew, and to bind him, body and soul. Yet, in taking stock of the intellectual labour and even of the journey-work in the thousand years, and making no allowance in this calculus for the handicap of the Jews in either class, it may be said that they entered the Middle Ages with endowments, achievements and aims, a just estimate of which does not prepare us for the gloomy record of seven centuries to come.

CHAPTER IV

DAWN OF THE SEPHARDIM

§ 1. LOOKING BACKWARDS.

THERE are two main views of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. One school of historians describes it, in the words of a younger and brilliant recruit,* as a "mighty process which destroyed the common culture of Europe"; another, represented by a Hibbert lecturer,† whose book has recently been reissued by the Professor of Political Science at Cambridge, characterizes it more acceptably as "part of a mightier movement than itself—the manifestation upon religious ground of the intellectual forces which inspire the speculation and have given us the science of today." The historian of the Jews in the Middle Ages has to make his choice between these views. Happily, the course of the present essay does not require us to discuss the arguments by which each school reaches its

* Hilaire Belloc, *How the Reformation Happened*, London, 1928; p. 277.

† Charles Beard, *The Reformation in its Relation to Modern Thought and Knowledge* (1883); new impression by Ernest Barker, London, 1927; p. 34.

conclusion. We are content to assume the position, fortified by Gen. i. 31, that the Reformation, being necessary, was good. The contrary assumption, suggesting that history should reverse its footsteps, would lead us away from the goal of modern knowledge, and, incidentally to our purpose, would invalidate the contribution of the Jews. For though, as our story unfolds itself, we shall witness, first, a rapid degradation in the external features of Jewish life, and only a partial recovery towards the close, yet, granting our assumption, which the Protestant martyrs shared, we shall watch the glowing flame of a tributary light within. To that extent, and only to that extent, no historian of that period can be objective. He must have an opinion about the Reformation. He must hold it to be desirable or undesirable. He must be prepared to say whether, given the fairy's wand, he would or would not let it happen again, all the conditions and circumstances being unchanged. Subject to that immense decision, which affects the colour of every event and the character of every act, it is possible to traverse the thousand years, to the end of the fifteenth century, in which modern Europe was being made, without prejudice or predilection. We decide, if we may put it so, for the Reformation.

Our choice is simplified by the fact that neither side has a special claim on Jewish sympathy.

Jews were persecuted impartially by both, and the historian of the Jews may define his attitude towards the Reformation solely on grounds of public policy, guided by the logic of events. In a matter of so much controversy and of passions so deep it has seemed well to make this position clear. For there are those—we could adduce ample evidence—who deem the Jews natural revolutionaries, *semper appetentes rerum novarum*, and always certain to be found, openly, or more commonly, in secret, conspiring against the established order of things, whether in Church or State. This theory is contradicted by the only testimony worth citing, namely, the history of the Jews. There is no trace of conspiracy, political or ecclesiastical, in the Pharisaic schools of *post-bellum* Palestine or in the Talmudic colleges of Babylon. Hillel, Gamaliel, Jehuda ha-Nasi, Rab, Mar Samuel, Saadiah—so far as their works are known to us, and their teachings are recorded, conspired neither against Rome nor Persia, neither against Christianity nor Islam. And these men were the leaders of the Jews. Akiba fought against Rome, and perished by a martyr's death, with the words of the *Shema* on his lips. The utmost proof of conspiracy which all their writings have ever yielded to a sifting test is a charge of alleged anti-Christian bias in certain phrases in one or two pre-Christian prayers, though Jerome and other unfriendly witnesses, who

consulted Jewish authorities for their own work, would have been eager to expose more substantial and demonstrable offences, had any such come to light. True, there was a repeated suspicion of treachery on the part of Jews, when the enemy, Moslem or barbarian, threatened a stronghold of the Empire. But there was never any proof, and there is at least the disproof, that in no instance in history did Jews reap any benefit from such tactics. The truth of the matter is, first, that no ruler took much pains to attach Jewish loyalty to his cause, whether winning or losing ; and secondly, that every ruler found it convenient at times to drive a scapegoat into the desert.

These considerations are adduced because our attitude towards the Reformation agrees with such measure of free choice as the Jews were competent to exercise in the various countries of Europe, in which its seeds were sown. There is, undoubtedly, throughout the centuries, a practical unanimity among the Jews in support of the intellectual forces of which the Reformation was the religious expression, and that unanimity would be confirmed by the opinion of most Jews today. Accordingly, the school of thought which holds that the Reformation "destroyed the common culture of Europe" must and does hold the Jews responsible for that destruction, in the ratio of their open or hidden influence on the actual and visible destroyers. The greater their

power behind the scenes, and the bigger their share in the world's unrest, the graver, according to this theory, becomes their responsibility for destroying European culture; and since it is within the purpose of the present essay to give full weight to the Jewish contribution, particularly in the Middle Ages, which we believe to have been directed to a desirable object, we have started by stating our position on the Reformers' side. If that position is blameworthy, and the results of the Reformation are to be deplored, then the anti-Semitism of the school of thought to which we are opposed is comprehensible, and even reasonable, so far as it is temperate. But if we are to regard the Reformation, according to our own school of thought, as a manifestation of the intellectual forces which inspire the science of today, then the anti-Semitism of the counter-Reformers is as wrong in principle as it is often cruel in practice.

Still looking backwards from the close of the fifteenth century, which brought this great movement into being, we may hazard another generalization. There was no place for the Jews in medieval Europe. This is a strange and even a formidable fact, which has received less notice than it deserves. We might refer to it to explain the presence of Jewish minorities, embarrassing the States in which they sojourn, and possessing no claim to permanent nationality except the

sanction of external force. But without dwelling on the effects, large or small, of this phenomenon, we may look more closely at its causes in the beginning. The prime cause of the placelessness of the Jews in the medieval social system was the basis of that system on the land. The capital landowner was the king, and estates held in tenure from the chief proprietor were known as *fiefs*—the origin of Feudalism. For Feudalism, from end to end, was just a system of land-tenure, in which the tenants performed certain services in return for holding their fiefs. Much of the land was held by the Church: thus the Rhineland was described as “a street of priests”; and the Church rendered services in its own kind, including hospitals, poor relief, etc., in which, *ex hypothesi*, there could be no room for Jews. The landed laymen were nobles, or feudal knights, whose essential service to the king was military in kind. It was their business to provide him with the army which he always required. By a process known as “sub-infeudation,” they let out lands in their turn, starting feudal claims at a lower knot; and it might happen that the loyalty of subtenants to a king’s feudal knight would surpass their loyalty to the king: the feudal castle, strong against the king’s enemies, might be converted into a stronghold against the king. With these difficulties we are not concerned, nor with the condition of the peasants who were

attached to the soil, nor with the justice administered under feudal law, nor with the romance of chivalry, and the squalor below the gilded romance. Our interest in feudal economy, which, with its evil and its good, prevailed in Europe for three or four hundred years, is limited to the perception that, from top to bottom, it was Jew-proof. Not the best-disposed king in Christendom—and there were well-disposed kings—could have introduced a Jew into its hierarchy at any link in the chain. No Jew was a serf at the bottom, no Jew was a noble at the top, and up and down the social scale of land-values he might have ranged, year in and year out, without finding house-room or foothold. Of course, there were, or there were to be, the towns, with their opportunities for trade and barter. “Town air makes a man free,” said a German proverb, but the freedom was confined to native citizens, and the admission of a “foreigner” depended on strength in wealth or arms. Moreover, “feudal government was designed rather to hamper than to assist commercial activity”;^{*} the towns were slow in acquiring any substantial measure of

^{*} Prof. P. Boissonnade, *Life and Work in Medieval Europe*, translated, with an Introduction by Dr. Eileen Power, London, 1927; p. 189. The sentence which follows is also significant to our context: “Moreover, the public opinion of all classes misunderstood the rôle of trade, and continued to look on the trader as a parasite, a speculator, a usurer, and on movable wealth as the fruit of fraud and rapine, but not of labour.”

independence, and the possession of a freehold was a common condition of civic privilege. The Synagogue was the only Jewish refuge. Round the Synagogue was the cluster of Jewish hovels, and in the Synagogue sometimes the Jews were burned. By the time that the towns were emancipated, the ghetto gates had been locked on their inhabitants.

It is necessary to grasp this fact of the complete, hard exclusion of the Jews from all participation in contemporary affairs through the formative epoch of European history, partly in order to understand how the status of a "king's chattel" was devised to give a Jew a bare right of subsistence, partly in order to arrive at certain psychological conclusions. We must not press these too far. It is probably as incorrect to say that all the faults of the Jews were the deposit of external experience, as to say, with the Church Fathers, that they were a people naturally execrable. We have marked in previous chapters the curious involuted process by which the qualities cultivated by the Jews in order to save their religious identity from the wreck of national unity become the qualities selected by the Roman State and its successor, the Roman Church, as specially odious to society. The feudal system, erected partly to protect Europe from the threat of foreign invasion, and to repair the civilization which had been threatened, increased the odium

of these attributes, and left the Jew inhospitably outside. His unsocial qualities became intensified, accordingly, and, like a cab-runner in London in the old days of the unemployed, he scavenged for outside jobs, from which he was roughly repulsed. The great Italian of the thirteenth century who knew

“ how savoureth of salt
The bread of others, and how hard a road
The going down and up another's stair,”

had no knowledge of the bitterer savour of bread always eaten with tears, and of the harder going on a moving staircase from which he might never dismount. The warders of the platforms were not to blame. They did what they did from the best motives. In the harsh efficiency of their strict programme for utilizing the resources of the soil to support the three classes of the population—clerks, soldiery and workers—there could be no provision for outlander or outlaw. It was through chinks in the armour of Chivalry and by evasions of Canon Law that Jews forced an entry here and there, invariably at their own peril. It has been well pointed out* that the old form of prayer for the Sovereign and Royal family, which is still widely used in the Jewish ritual, bore unmistakable traces of the placelessness of medieval Jewries. “May the supreme King of kings,”

* By the late I. Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, London, 1896; Introduction, p. xviii.

ran the English version, even in the reign of Queen Victoria, "in His mercy put compassion into her heart, and into the hearts of her counsellors and nobles, that they may deal kindly with us and with all Israel." There was no Jewish Queen's Counsel till 1858, no noble till 1885, and compassion and kindness were the utmost return which could be sought for Jewish loyalty and service. But without criticizing a rigid system, which it would be an anachronism to blame, we may mention here one unexpected consequence. The Jewish religion was the latest to be reformed. Though, as we shall see in the following sections, Spanish Jews were the carriers of the ideas which inspired the leaders of the German Reformation, Jews stopped short of carrying them to Judaism. So long as they might take nothing from without, they would jettison nothing within. They guarded their way of life, their *Torah*, without diminishment, bringing to it the devotion of body and soul, and even adding to it when they could. For, after all, it was their only safe possession, the only *terra firma* which they owned. So the Jewish Middle Ages, which were not, technically, medieval, stretched away to nearly the end of the eighteenth century, when the freshening breeze of social emancipation blew through the fence of the *Torah*. The "Sephardim"*

* *Sepharad* (Obad. 20) is identified with Spain; *Ashkenaz* (Gen. x. 3) with the inhabitants of Germany. The

of free Spain sowed the seeds, but the grain was stored, where the harvest was reaped, by the "Ashkenazim" in their German and Polish ghettos.

§ 2. WITH THE FLOWING TIDE.

The lines of Jewish life in Europe were not set towards usury in a ghetto. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places," a Jew of Cordova might have said in the tenth century, when Hasdai ibn Shaprut (*c.* 910-970) was minister at the Court of the Ommiad Caliph, Abdurrahman III. (d. 961), and of his successor, Hakim II. (d. 976). The decline of this Caliphate was fairly rapid: it hardly lasted through the first quarter of the eleventh century, but Moorish culture in Spain survived the political supremacy of the Moors, and, so long and so widely as it flourished, the lines fell in pleasant places for Spanish Jews. Andalusia was as the name of a happy garden to the victims of Canon Law and feudal custom in the intolerant cities of Latin Europe, and it was not till the fifteenth century, with the establishment of the Inquisition, the union of Aragon and Castile, and the expulsion of the Jews from the common dominion of

Hebrew pronunciations and the rituals of the Sephardic (Spanish and Portuguese) and Ashkenazic (German and Polish) Jews differ in some particulars from one another.

Ferdinand and Isabella in 1492, that the pleasant places were left desolate. Then their Jewish inhabitants, who, despite many harsh restrictions, had loved their land and increased its resources, moral, intellectual, and material, had to join their placeless brethren on the moving staircase, which debouched into the ghetto with its badge,* first ordained by Pope Innocent III. in 1215.

It was the flowing tide of Mohammedanism which brought the Jews with the Arabs into Spain, and the ingenuity of map-makers has been employed to exhibit cartographically the course of that tide and its recession. Looking northwards from the Mediterranean seaboard, Granada remained under Moslem rule throughout the period we are considering until nearly the close of the fifteenth century. But the area of Moorish influence was gradually contracted by Christian conquest. Cordova fell in 1236, Valencia in 1238, Marcia in 1243, Seville in 1244, Cadiz in 1262, and Cartagena in 1276, pressing down on the last stronghold of Moorish Spain. Further north, Christianity had been gaining ground quite steadily since the tenth century. It reached Salamanca in 1055, central Toledo in 1085, Saragossa in 1118, Lisbon in the west in 1147, Tortosa in the east in 1148. Moslem rule in the Kingdom of Majorca came to its end in 1232. Obviously, these centuries of the reconquest of

* See Note 6.

Spain from the Moors, and this deep drive of specifically Christian forces from north and east to south and west would leave a heavy impress on the redeemed territories. It was an impress at once military and ecclesiastical. The victorious kings gladly took from the Pope the direction for the government of their lands, and the clergy and nobles were rewarded with grants of offices and estates. All this may be read in Spanish histories, but the writers of those histories, who are justly proud of the recovery of their country for the Church of Rome, are liable, pardonably, to omit the benefits which had been conferred upon that country by the unbelievers. It is to the obverse of the shield, and to the forces which were driven back to the Mediterranean, or which were sent out on a hard road to other lands, that the historian of the Jews has to turn for his estimate of their contribution to the civilization of Europe. Graetz, the leading historian in this class, justly says of Jehudah Halevi, who flourished in the eleventh to twelfth century, that, "if ever Spain could be brought to lay aside its prejudices, and to desist from estimating its great men of history by the standard of the Church, Jehudah Halevi would occupy a place of honour in its Pantheon," and the dictum, as temperate as it is reasonable, is capable of wide expansion. For when the flowing tide was turned back, and the Cross replaced the Crescent in Spain, the very

delay imposed by Mohammedanism intensified the welcome to the Church, even when that Church signalized its triumph by pursuing even the ghost of the vanished foe.

Hasdai ibn Shaprut, it will be observed, whose *floruit* at Cordova occurred in the middle of the tenth century, was a contemporary of Saadiah, the learned Gaon at Sura, to whom, as we saw in the last chapter, liberal thought is permanently indebted for the method of free approach to the Old Testament. Saadiah had acquired this method from the Karaites, whom he defeated on the field of their own choosing, and he taught it by extension to later founders of the German Reformation. We are to reckon this contemporaneousness as something more than an accident in time. It corresponds and points to a change of scene, by which Jewish history was transferred from the East to the West. The Geonim and the Exilarchs disappear, and Judaism takes a longer step, away from quasi-national institutions, towards the purely rabbinical or learned character, which the Pharisees had impressed upon it in Judæa when they saved it from the fate of the Jewish nation. And there was even more than this in the contemporaneousness of Hasdai and Saadiah. Unlike the traveller in Horace, the Jews changed their mentality with their sky. The succession of Cordova to Sura as the centre of the Jewish stage distinctly quickened the vital

current in Jewish life, and we begin to mark a hopeful sign of what we may call applied Judaism. This development was arrested in the "placeless" countries to which Jews were driven out of Spain, but it left its monuments and its appeal, and the spark was never extinguished quite. Judaism was applied in this epoch to medicine and philosophy, to pure letters and even to public affairs, with a freedom in using its stored resources which recalls the memory of Philo in Alexandria. Indeed, a catena could be established from Philo through Maimonides to Spinoza, and so to Jewish reform in the eighteenth century; and it is significant to observe that, as Philo's Hellenism was opposed by Gamaliel, so Maimonides aroused suspicion among his orthodox brethren, and Spinoza was expelled from the Synagogue. If we have been successful in explaining the purpose and necessity of the "fence" erected around the *Torah*, this repeated suspicion of applied Judaism on the part of the undistributed Jews will be more readily understood.

Hasdai himself seems to have been haunted by it. So, at least, we may read his correspondence with Joseph, King (*khakan*) of the Chazars, a white people forming an independent State in the neighbourhood of the Crimea on the borders of Europe and Asia. In 740 the ruler of the Chazars had been converted to Judaism; how many of his subjects followed him we do not know,

but the Jewish religion became traditional in the royal house, a princess of which was the mother of Emperor Leo IV. (775-80), and the tradition held till the destruction of the dynasty and the absorption of the kingdom at the end of the tenth century.* Hasdai's letter to this Jewish ruler seems to have been inspired by a desire to exchange the precarious, if highly honourable, position of a Jewish minister at a Mohammedan court for the security of a home among his own people. He yearned for the peace of Zion: "Disinherited and disheartened in exile," the close of his letter is said to have run, "we have to listen in silence while men say, Every people possesses its own Kingdom, but you lack even the shadow of a Kingdom in all the earth." The precise terms of the letter may not be authentic: a tale so romantic gathered legends; but the basis of the story is true, that the Chazars of the Crimea had a Jewish king, and that Hasdai, the Jewish statesman in Andalusia, felt a call to the home behind the fence. Another veracious legend reminds us of Bismarck and Disraeli. Among Hasdai's services to the Caliph was his settlement of a dispute between his master and Otto I., the German Emperor, and the envoy is said to have reported to the Emperor that the Jew

* The conversion of this ruler, of his court, and of an untold number of his subjects, and the prevalence of Judaism among the Chazars for a period of over 200 years, illustrate the mixed descent of the Jews. See Note 2.

Hasdai was the man ! Yet he, too, sought the escape from the dream of the world to the world of the dream. The eternal mystic in the heart of the wandering Jew called him from the unreality of secular experience to the reality constructed by Talmudic doctors, and he, too, in hours of disillusion, turned back to the comfort of Jerusalem. Like the tired chancellor of a later king, he could protest:

“ Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye;
I feel my heart new open'd.”

What Hasdai ibn Shaprut did was to transplant to, and to extend in, Moorish Spain the philological cult of the Hebrew Bible by which Saadiah had tamed the rebellious furrows of the Karaite revolt. It seems a small thing today to insist on the significance of grammars and lexicons, but the small thing becomes great when we try to imagine our studies without such aids. There were times when those aids were lacking. Petrarch would have given his tired eyes—tired by deciphering crabbed manuscripts—for a common Greek-Italian or Greek-Latin dictionary, by the help of which he might have translated Homer; and Reuchlin's first-fruits of foreign study was a Hebrew grammar (*Rudimenta Hebraica*). The one, in the fourteenth century, was the Humanist who ushered in the Renaissance; the other, at the beginning of the sixteenth, turned the Renaissance into the Reformation; and in the

front of both movements were manuals of the Greek and Hebrew languages, in which the treasures of antiquity had been laid up. Hasdai, in the tenth century, anticipated Petrarch and Reuchlin, and inaugurated an earlier Humanistic epoch. We read of him as a patron of learning, encouraging Jews from distant countries, as Petrarch encouraged wandering Greeks, to bring their wares to Cordova, and there to found the use of words on principles of syntax and construction. Chaucer's astringent work, when the Renaissance crossed to England, in ridding our language of medieval vices and in regulating it for literary use, was effected at this earlier period for Hebrew and Arabic, then employed, like the Latin of the Humanists, as media of national literature, throwing forward their conventions into the prose and verse of native Spanish writers. It is in this sense that Graetz is right in claiming for Jehudah Halevi a niche in the Spanish pantheon: his poems are a part of Spanish letters by the same token as the Latinists of modern Europe have a place in the literary history of their own countries.

We cannot attempt to enumerate the Spanish Humanists in this class. By their grammatical and philological labours they effected a twofold reform, comparable in several respects with the later reforms in Italy and Germany. First, they pruned the Hebrew Bible of its overgrowth of

allegory and legend, and made it once more a work of literature—a *book*. As they had given it to Jerome in the fourth century, and as they were to give it to Reuchlin in the sixteenth, so they gave it to students in the tenth, with intense reverence and immense pains. Secondly, they approached these special studies with much the same mind and purpose as inspired early Homeric critics to rescue the author of the *Iliad* from the mass of myth known as the *Roman de Troie*; and thus they were equipped for scholarly achievements in other branches of research. They were physicians, philosophers, mathematicians, poets, and they brought to those arts and crafts a new sense of order and arrangement, which, again, may be compared directly with the methods of study that Linacre and Grocyn carried home from Italy across the Alps. Perhaps a third effect should be added, which may likewise be illustrated by the after-example of the Italian Humanists. They were a very quarrelsome crowd. The differences of critics, like those of doctors, are proverbial, and in the early history of criticism its pioneers were tenacious of their views. But one good result of scholars' polemics is the rapid advance of knowledge, and this, too, occurred in the epoch of the Jewish-Arabic Renaissance in Spain.

A single example out of many may be selected as a type of the writers in the generation imme-

diately after Hasdai. Ibn Janach, or Abul-Walid Merlan, or, more conveniently for modern ears, Jonah Marinus, was born about 990 in Cordova, which he had to quit in 1012. After sundry adventures, he settled in Saragossa, where he practised medicine till his death about 1050. We pass over his disputes with the Talmudists on the one part and with the Humanists on the other, which helped to turn his environment in Saragossa into a miniature city of the Renaissance, and we fasten at once on another Renaissance trait—Jonah's conviction of the value of his own services. "I worked day and night," he said, "with the utmost industry and devotion, so that I consumed more (midnight) oil than other men consume wine," and the saying recalls the just pride in original achievement which Petrarch learned from his Latin masters. Moreover, like the greater men who trod the broader and later road of progress, Jonah's fame has survived devouring time. His pioneer work on the Hebrew language, which, like Reuchlin after him, he regarded as the key to other sciences, was composed originally in Arabic, and consisted of two distinct parts, one of which dealt with grammar and the other with lexicography. Part I. he called the "flower-beds," and Part II. the "roots" of speech. The books were rendered into Hebrew in the twelfth century by Judah ibn Tibbon, the leading member of a family of

translators, and the complete work was still regarded as authoritative by scholars and research-workers as eminent as Neubauer and Derenbourg in the late nineteenth century.

This was what Hasdai did. Four hundred years before Petrarch, he initiated a humanistic movement, founded on Hebrew instead of on Latin studies. He drove a pier of a like bridge, on which to cross to the modern from the ancient world, into the like shifting sands of myth, allegory and legend. Literary studies under his guidance, and under that of his pupils and successors, became a discipline and an art, in which words, the constructive elements, had to be used in their correct meanings and disposed exactly in their proper places. They became available for the muses, and in Spain, as in Italy, there sprang up in the wake of the prosodists, philologists, lexicographers and stylists a generation of new poets, eager, as "E. K." wrote in his Preface to Spenser's *Shepherds Calendar*, "as young birds, that be newly crept out of the nest, by little first to prove their tender wings, before they make a greater flight." So flew Jehudah Halevi, whose name has occurred already, and to whose poems we shall presently come.

Before considering them, however, we must note briefly what Hasdai did *not* do. He could not, if he would, and most probably he would not,

if he could, have transposed the key of Jewish destiny. He was an innovator, but not an iconoclast. Temperamentally, as we saw, he was warned by his environment of the precariousness of worldly ambitions. Unlike the later chancellor whom we have quoted, he would not float too far on the flowing tide. He felt his responsibility as a Jewish leader not less than his loyalty to his fellow-Jews, and, apart from this individual feeling, the time for Jewish reform had not arrived. The true heir to the Geonim and Exilarchs of the Babylonian Dispersion, and to Hillel and the Palestine schools, was not Hasdai, Jonah, or another. These opened a window in Moorish Spain which let in a breath of secular studies. Their light illumined a road which led at last to assimilation. But a difference of light or leading, like that between the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, was recognized in the title of "Light of the Exile," which was reserved for their contemporary, Rabbi Gershom of Mayence (c. 960-1030). To Gershom and his writings we shall come back. Here we may note that his "light" shone more brightly in the darkness which was rapidly drawing over the Jews. There was still sunshine in Spain, when Hasdai at Cordova, like Philo in Alexandria, lit a torch from the wisdom of the Gentiles. But when the Jews in the night outside Spain were reinforced by their Spanish co-religionists, driven out from the

light into the dark, these, too, became content to exchange the guiding cloud of their lost day for the pillar of fire of the common Hebrew night. Perhaps they found in the community compensation for what they resigned. Hasdai, as we have seen, was subject to this atavistic pull. Anyhow, the opened window was shut down, and an intenser study of the Talmud proved best suited to the "light of the Exile." Meanwhile, we may say that Hasdai's light, though obscured, was never extinct. It grew pale, like the moon in daytime, and thin, like a candle in the sun, but it was always burning, though unseen; and in an environment which suits it, it will shine as a guide again. For the methods of Hasdai survived the short day of the Renaissance in Spain, and before night descends upon the Sephardim we should examine their legacy to modern thought.

§ 3. THE END OF A BEGINNING.

We shall examine it in the work of three representative writers: Solomon ibn Gabirol, whose dates are, approximately, 1020-1070, and who is identified with the schoolman known as Avicbron; Jehudah Halevi, whose dates are, approximately, 1086-1141; and Moses ben Maimon, known as Maimonides, 1135-1204. Other names will occur in connection with them,

but, roughly, the century and a half (1050-1200), within which their flowering-time falls, may be taken as reproducing, or, rather, *preproducing* in Spain many of the marks of the century and a half before the Reformation, say, 1350-1500.

Then why the gap, we must ask? Why the discontinuity and broken column? Why did these Spanish Humanists and Reformers, using Hebrew or Arabic for their medium, part so abruptly from the line which started again with the Latin writers in Italy? Why did their fountain of learning, which had risen so high in Andalusia and Provence, burrow underground so soon, and lose itself in sand? Dante, Mirandola, Reuchlin, Luther, even the English translators of the Authorized Version, all came to them from time to time, half-furtively, like Jerome in the desert, or openly seeking help. Yet their day was lamentably short. Darkness gathered over the sky, where Hasdai ibn Shaprut himself, in the security of Cordova in the tenth century, watched it appear like the shadow of a man's hand.

First of all, about the likeness between the two periods which emphasizes the contrast of their fate. We have referred already to the polemics, in which the scholars of both epochs were so active. If the experience of ibn Janach (Jonah Marinos), for example, be compared with that of Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457), a forerunner of

the Reformation, who also dealt in Biblical philology, a striking resemblance will be apparent. Another suggestive parallel may be established between Gabirol and some of the Italian Humanists. The former wrote a rhymed grammar in four hundred Hebrew lines, and this feat of versification is matched by many Latin poems of the fifteenth century, dealing with similarly dry material. In his introduction to this grammar Gabirol spoke of the Hebrew language as that "in which the angelic choirs daily praise their Creator, in which God revealed the Law on Sinai, the Prophets prophesied and the Psalmist sang." Not otherwise Reuchlin in 1494 spoke of the same Hebrew language as "simple, uncorrupted, holy, terse and vigorous. God confers in it direct with men, and men with angels, without interpreters, face to face." One more very little but significant point occurs for notice. A certain philosopher, Solomon ben Joshua, who lived from 1754 to 1800, adopted the name of Maimon, and is still known as Solomon Maimon, out of admiration for the doctrines of Maimonides, his senior by six centuries. A similar tribute of learned devotion was paid in the era of Italian Humanism. Georgios Gemistos, a Greek teacher in Florence (1356-1450), adopted the name of Pletho, which has the same meaning as Gemistos, because it resembled that of his master in philosophy, Plato. Lastly, those who are familiar with

the Dominicans' opposition to Hebraism at the time of Reuchlin's Hebrew studies, and with the origin of the satire by the young bloods of Erfurt University known as "The Epistles of Obscure Men," will come with fresh sympathy to the battle between Maimonists and Obscurantists which broke out in French Jewry in the thirteenth century. The works of Maimonides were publicly burnt in Montpellier and Paris, and in the thirteenth as in the fifteenth century Dominicans helped to light the flame.

If this likeness may be taken to be established, in certain features independent of the writers' works, it is relevant to Jewish history in the Christian era to ask why the esteem of the Jews, in the Renaissance which developed in the fourteenth century, was so different, say, from that of the Greeks after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Even before that date, which brought wandering Platonists to Florence, students of Boccaccio and Petrarch will remember their Greek tutor, who proved so unpleasant a house-mate and so incompetent a scholar. The Greeks may fairly be said to have represented a tradition of learning far less continuous than the Jewish, yet they were held in much higher honour than contemporary Jews. Reuchlin's recourse to Jewish teachers was a kind of secret vice, compared to his relations with Argyropoulos, who had taught him Greek in Rome. "Ecce, Græcia

nostro exsilio transvolavit Alpes," exclaimed Argyropoulos, when his pupil carried Hellenism out of Italy to Germany; but the sons of a longer and a harder exile, whose garnered learning went to fertilize Reuchlin's soil, crossed the seas and the hills with heavy burdens. A kinder fate than they encountered, and a longer prosperity, such as it was, than of a century and a half, would have seemed to be in store for the Spanish-Jewish philosophers and poets, who tended the lore of Greece for Christian schoolmen, whom Dante cited as rationalists,* whom the historian† of rationalism in Europe describes, as in that period and that country, "still pursuing the path of knowledge, amassing learning and stimulating progress, while the intellect of Christendom, enthralled by countless superstitions, had sunk into a deadly torpor," and who are accounted by the historian‡ of classical scholarship to have done "great service by inspiring the students of the West with a new enthusiasm for learning." Gabirol, writes Israel Zangwill, his translator, was "the first Hebrew poet to use the secular image of the Muse": it would seem like the fair beginning of a time, when the secular muse of Hebrew poesy would soar to heights above Helicon, and haply, like Milton's, above Sinai too. "And he is the first Hebrew poet to handle

* *Paradiso*, v., 81.

† W. E. H. Lecky.

‡ Sir John E. Sandys.

philosophy.” So we think at once of a Lucretius of the Jews, and of the splendid sequel of poetry which flowed from that inspired fount. Endless horizons seemed to open out, when Gabirol enounced in his pride:

“I am the Master-Singer, and Song is my slave.”

And yet the clamps of expulsion were fastened ineluctably on the Spanish Jews. Five hundred years after Hasdai, who, with tragic presentiment, had sought from the King of the Chazars direction to an independent Jewish State, his co-religionists were driven out of Spain, which they had civilized for more than half a millennium.

It is no part of our purpose to harrow readers of this essay with tales of the suffering inflicted on the Jewish subjects of Ferdinand and Isabella, when Torquemada was Inquisitor-General. These true tales, more dire than fiction, may be read in the works of Graetz and other historians, and they furnished Byron with his generous epigram:

“The wild dove hath her nest, the fox his cave,
Mankind their country—Israel but the grave.”

Our more immediate object is to show how Jewish experience outside Spain cast its advancing shadow on the pathway of Jewish peace and scholarship within. Take the very year 1492 of the decree of expulsion by the Sovereigns of Aragon and Castile. Columbus noted in his

diary that it occurred in the month in which he received his Sovereign's commission to set sail for the New World. We can add to this entry the significant facts that a Jew accompanied his expedition, and was among the first to land in America; that Jewish mathematicians had helped to invent the instruments, and Jewish cartographers to draw the maps, which made the expedition practicable, and that Jewish money went to equip it. Moreover, Ferdinand and Isabella might have recalled the services of the Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, who had circled the known world, and left a plain record of his itinerary, three hundred years before Columbus came from Genoa to Spain. The period of Jewish activity—of Jewish equal activity—in Spain had been actually longer than the period which has elapsed since 1492, with all its vast historical deposit. It was a population with much more than five hundred years of roots and no inconsiderable flowers that went out “in the name of the Lord” to Turkey, France, Italy, Africa, the Greek Isles; to slavery, plague, drowning; to the secret Judaism known as Marranism, or, very rarely, to complete assimilation. It would have proved an overwhelming catastrophe, this tragic act of 1492, if it had not been foreseen, or at least foreboded, in the inner consciousness of Spanish Jews, from Hasdai in the tenth century onwards. How should they not

foresee it, and how should they not be filled with foreboding, when the whole lifetime of the Jews in England, 1066-1290, fell plumb within the five centuries between the death of Hasdai in 970 and the decree of 1492? We need not itemize this experience. It is written in letters of blood. The massacres of Jews which followed in the line of the march of the First Crusade at the end of the eleventh century; the Second and Third Crusades in the twelfth century; the Lateran Council of Pope Innocent in 1215; the increasing rigours of the thirteenth century in France, England, and the Germanies; the Black Death of 1348; the expulsions, the burnings, the terrors, which accumulated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, till the Jew, with his badge and his blinkers, might neither look up nor look round—in this light it is surely not surprising that the Jews of the brief Renaissance in Spain saw the shadow lie across their path, even on the highway of intellectual progress. Nor can we be surprised that their co-religionists outside Spain feared, even while they admired, the signs of an advance of Jewish learning. They burned the works of Maimonides and betrayed his “heresy” to the Dominicans, thus repeating, in a minor degree, their attitude towards Jesus in the first century, and their indifference to Philo. It was a frequent fate of philosophers in the Middle Ages, as the records of the Inquisition stand to testify, and

we need not pause either to condemn it or to explain it. "The Cross," says a Christian theologian,* "is the lineal ancestor of the stake and the gallows; and the Chief Priests, if they ceased to function after the fall of Jerusalem, have had their imitators in Christian Europe. If the act of the official authorities is intelligible in the later instances, and historians have not failed to read its meaning, it is not less intelligible in the earliest instance." We are not discussing a controversial aspect. If we were, we might have dwelt at greater length on the reprisals exacted from the Jews. We refer to it merely in order to show that a conservatism in faith, and a suspicion of boldness in speculation, were not confined to Jewish thought, and we submit that the experience of the Jews directly counselled them to such resistance. Through all the seeming-secure centuries of Hebrew speculation in Spain, culminating in Avicbron and Maimonides, Jews were aware, out of their present and past history, of the destiny awaiting them in 1492. The fathers of Scholasticism and Reform, the heirs of Hasdai and Jonah, and Gabirol, and Halevi, who inspired students of the West with a new enthusiasm for learning, were to be dispossessed of their heritage, and driven out of the land which they had cultivated and civilized for five hundred

* R. Travers Herford, *Judaism in the New Testament Period*, London, 1928; p. 220.

years. They had to go from a land of gathering shadows into lands where the night was thick, and, unless they had been taught to walk in darkness, and to use the pillar of fire instead of the pillar of cloud, unless, that is to say, they had been ready to make common cause with their co-religionists, they would have found neither hope nor home: neither the mother-comfort of the ideal Jerusalem, nor the lean resources of the mean ghettos where the fire was tended.

We may turn now to our three selected Spanish writers. It has been proper, however, to keep steadily in mind their contemporaneousness, in the epoch 1050-1200, with their kinsmen on the moving staircase of feudal Europe. We cannot write of both in one sentence, or see both in one view. But both lived at the same time, and in this fact lies the explanation of the discontinuity of the Jewish Reform movement, which went underground till the eighteenth century. Spanish Jews, by the circumstances of their environment, sought the hearth at the centre of affairs, and warmed themselves in its glow for a while. But Jews at the back of the world's affairs did not travel or trade or think aloud on equal terms with their Christian neighbours. They might not own land, or till the soil, or practise a profession, or ply an honest calling, or even eke out a precarious livelihood, except as chattels of their ruler and outlaws in his realm. They were

restricted, within their single occupation, to its most sordid and least exhilarating function. We might remark that they raised it to its highest power, and filled it with daring and imagination; and that, though they were incited to criminal ways, to ways of usury and coin-clipping, to ways of a Shylock and a Fagin, yet, within those rigid limits, there was space for a Rothschild to grow. For it would seem that, even in a narrow room, the Jews must always excel. But these considerations, if they arise at all, belong to a later chapter. Here we are concerned to point out that Jews seeking the centre were drawn back to the Jews on the outskirts, and that, late or soon (the blow fell in 1492), the Spanish Jews of 1050-1200 would join their lot with their co-religionists outside. "From earliest times," a Jewish philosopher* tells us, "these opposite tendencies—the centripetal and the centrifugal—may be observed side by side in the history of the Jews." We observe them clearly in this period. We observe Hasdai and his successors, in the spirit of Philo and Saadiah, seeking the centre of life, translating, weighing, comparing, and keeping an open mind to impressions from without. And we observe the Jews on the moving staircase huddling together, shrinking from the centre, and uneasily suspicious of the New Learning, whether taught

* Dr. A. Wolf, *Aspects of the Jewish Genius*, London, 1910; p. 119.

by Gentiles or Jews. For unless they cherished the light within, who would save it from extinction? And if the light were extinguished, what would survive of Judaism, and what beacon would shine for shipwrecked Jews? Moreover, judged even by lower motives, such a centrifugal tendency is the wisdom of the underdog and becomes the habit of the pariah.

CHAPTER V

THE SEPHARDIC LEGACY

§ 1. CARRIERS OF HELLENISM.

THE place of Aristotle in medieval studies is a familiar tale. If we rehearse a few of its features in this section, it is not in order to revive old controversies and forgotten beliefs, but because the conscience of scholarship was so much in Jewish keeping in early times. Before the coming of the schoolmen, scholasticism had existed in embryo among the Arabs and the Jews. They had preserved and extended the Greek *materia philosophica* and some of the methods of philosophical inquiry; and it was partly on this account that Pope Innocent III., to whom it fell at the beginning of the thirteenth century to confirm the foundation of the two Orders of Friars, imposed a badge of shame on the two races of unchartered explorers. But Aristotle, the eponym of Greek thought, was wanted in Christian schools, in Paris, Bologna, and elsewhere, and, when they turned back to look for him, their need conquered their reluctance, and they turned necessarily to the despised unbelievers. But though they

kissed, they did not tell. They made passing allusions to their Hebrew source-books, but the full measure of their debt has not even yet been computed. "It would not be easy," says a modern authority,* "to exaggerate the impression produced in thirteenth-century Oxford by the *discovery* that Aristotle's logic was only part of a larger philosophy, hitherto unknown, and by the *translations* which made his writings on natural philosophy, metaphysics, and ethics, *for the first time* familiar to the Western world"; and, as at Oxford, so in other seats of learning. Note here the words which we have italicized. The Jewish-Arabic versions of Greek philosophy discovered knowledge hidden till then from the slumbering mind of Western Europe. "It meant a new birth of science," continues the historian; and he characterizes the revelation as "the greatest event in the intellectual history of the age."

It is at no lower level of achievement that we are to repair in the twentieth century to these unremembered pioneers in the eleventh and twelfth. They kept the conscience of scholarship in the Dark Ages. They were the midwives of a new birth of science. They prepared the greatest event in the intellectual history of the West. True, their work is called "translation." But the translators of Aristotle to the schoolmen were

* Sir Charles Mallet, *History of the University of Oxford*, i., 76.

treasurers and commentators too. "Arab and Moor and Syrian and Jew," writes another grave professor* almost lyrically, "treasured his books while the Western World sat in darkness": the same Western World, by the way, which, according to Lecky, had "sunk into a deadly torpor"; and it was awakened at this juncture "for the first time."

Recent evidence is cumulative to the effect that, in the very moment of intense antagonism to Christian intercourse with Jews, the great schoolmen of the thirteenth century—Albertus Magnus, 1193-1280, Roger Bacon, 1214-1295, Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1274, Edmund Rich, Robert Grosseteste, and the rest—were seeking from Jewish books the material which they required for a bridge from the old to the new learning, or rather, from the Old to the New World. For there is a close analogy between Jewish labourers in either department. They made instruments in both. There were Jewish astronomers in Castile and Jewish cartographers in Aragon before Marco Polo sailed East or Prince Henry the Navigator built his observatory, and the chief astronomers to King John II. of Portugal in the era of Vasco de Gama and Columbus were two Jews: Abraham Zacuto (1450-1510) and his pupil, Joseph Vecinho. A like skill in instrument-making—in constructing

* Prof. D'Arcy Thompson, *Legacy of Greece*, p. 160.

the implements of modern learning—was displayed by Jewish scholars in Spain in the twelfth century, and they made a like contribution to the discovery of a new world. The actual discoverer of that New World was Petrarch, the herald of Western Humanism. John Addington Symonds exactly calls him “the Columbus of a new spiritual hemisphere,” and Sir John Sandys writes in the same sense that “his efforts to return to the Old World of the Latin classics led to his discovery of the New World of the Italian Renaissance”; and, as Jewish makers of nautical and astronomical instruments laboured in advance of the geographers and explorers, so Jewish makers of the tools of the intellect laboured in advance of the rebirth of learning. Their names should be remembered today. The old *mappæ mundi* of the cartographers have no present interest for travellers; no present pilot of the Atlantic, whether by sea or by air, would rely on a sextant of five hundred years ago. But they possess historical value, the old implements of observation, which a student of the growth of the mind of man cannot afford to ignore; and a like value attaches to the tools fabricated in Spain by the grammarians, lexicographers, commentators and translators, who carried Hellenism from the East to the West. “These translations,” we read, in a final piece of recent evidence,* “were conveyed largely through

* By Dr. and Mrs. Charles Singer, *Legacy of Israel*, p. 177.

Hebrew channels. . . . European Jewish thinkers were consciously developing Hellenic philosophy while the rest of Europe was, as yet, in its childhood. A reasonable claim may be made for the Jewish communities of Southern France, the Iberian Peninsula, and the Rhineland, as having had the longest and most ancient continuous civilized history in Europe outside the classical zone. In a cultural sense the Jews were the first Europeans." Renan, in a famous and well-understood phrase, called Petrarch "the first modern man." If this claim for the Jews be conceded, then it may fairly be remarked that their primacy in Greek studies made modern men of them before Petrarch. To carry, to transmit, and to translate were no mere journey-men's handiwork.

The recent evidence which we have cited to this proposition is reinforced by more ancient testimony. Probably enough has been said to mark the extent of the service which these Jewish carriers rendered to civilization. But what of its intention? What of Aristotle himself, the patient object of all that digging and planting—that excavation of his writings, and that tending them with dictionaries and notes? We need not discuss any branch of Aristotelian philosophy, though we may observe for information that his poetics became of greater interest at a considerably later date, and that his treatise on the

Athenian constitution was not recovered till 1890. But we must grasp the significance of that philosophy if we are to measure the value of the Jewish contribution. Those whose memories go back to 1890 may still recall the excitement which greeted the restored *Politeia*. We have to multiply the cause of that emotion by all the works of Aristotle, and to intensify its expression by an immense restriction of the area of scholarship, if we are to attempt to understand the quality of Jewish service in this kind. We are to imagine Aristotle unknown yet conjectured, inexpressive yet a tradition, awaiting the summons which should arouse him from his muted sleep in the Dark Ages. Not otherwise Homer awaited his critics' awakening behind the screen of Dictys and Dares, the reputed writers of a prose-epitome of the *Iliad* sometime between the fourth and the sixth century. For the true measure of the value of carriers' service is not the distance that they travel, but the obstacles which they surmount and the routes which they open out. The service of these Jewish carriers is comparable to that of the pioneers of ocean-traffic, because "Aristotle" was new ground. He was not, as now, a row of texts, but rather, like Tennyson's Arthur, "a gray king, whose name, a ghost," streamed cloudlike and uncaptured. The universities were surprised in the thirteenth century to find that his logic was flanked by treatises on metaphysics,

ethics and natural philosophy. These were the *terra incognita*, which the carriers had opened out. By their translations, as we saw above, his writings were made "for the first time familiar to the Western World," and thus the *intention* of Jewish service was as notable as its extent. We need call but two former witnesses. Among the *spiriti magni* in the First Circle of the Inferno, Dante saw "the Master of those who know sitting with his philosophic family." The "Master" was Aristotle, and the "family" included Socrates, Plato, Democritus, Diogenes, Anaxagoras, Thales, Empedocles, Heraclitus, Zeno, Tully (Cicero) and "moral" Seneca, Euclid, Ptolemy and Hippocrates. Avicenna and Galen reinforced it, and Averroes, "who made the Great Commentary." We may supply some family dates. The Greeks and Latins are doubtless well known, but Galen, physician to Marcus Aurelius, belongs to the second century; Avicenna (980-1037) was a Persian by birth and a famous writer on medicine and philosophic method; Averroes (1126-1198) was born at Cordova, and was coeval with Maimonides. It was a company, therefore, of mixed blood and of more than fifteen hundred years' difference in age; and this diffusion is characteristic of Aristotelian studies in Western Europe in the twelfth century.

Before citing our second piece of evidence to the equal authority imputed in that century to

all the members of the Master's scattered "family"—a view which may safely be compared with Sir Philip Sidney's similarly uncritical conjunction of Theocritus, Virgil and Sannazaro (1458-1530) as equal models for pastoral poetry—we would refer for a moment to Dante's Jewish contacts. Avicenna and Averroes, whom he locates, did not happen to be Jews, though the latter, who wrote the commentaries on Aristotle, frequented the Jewish set in Cordova, and was even regarded by some of his opponents, in the eager controversies of scholarship, as having joined their communion. So far as concerns the philosophic family which Dante collected round Aristotle, there was no distinction between Jew and Moslem. Further, without pursuing the fascinating but very technical problem, which still awaits thorough investigation, of Dante's ultimate debt to the Hebrew sources of the Arabic writers who preceded him, in some of his journeys to the Inferno and Paradiso, we are aware that his intimate friend, Brunetto Latini, had visited Castile. There he would have met the "carriers" in active work, and along these and other roads Dante must have been in touch with Jewish-Arabic thought.

Now, for our second witness, consider an altarpiece painted in 1345 by Francesco Traini, in the Church of Santa Catarina at Pisa. It represents St. Thomas Aquinas, *doctor angelicus*, the

great pupil of the great Dominican, Albert, seated in the middle of the picture with a Bible in his hand, open at Proverbs viii. 7: "For my mouth shall speak truth, and wickedness is an abomination to my lips." Above him is Christ in glory, with rays descending from his lips on to the head of the saint. Below him is Averroes prostrate, with his "abominable" Commentary on the ground, and on each of his shoulders he is wearing the Pope's badge of shame. Faithful Dominicans, lit by rays from the saint's open Bible, stand to his left and right below. Aristotle on the right proffers his *Ethics*, Plato on the left his *Timæus*, and each book is lit by a saintly ray. From the lips of Christ rays also descend on to two groups, right and left, of prophets: Moses, John, Mark, Paul, Matthew, and Luke. It is the symbol of the triumph of scholasticism, of scholasticism raised to its height, and scorning the base degrees by which it rose. Aristotle is reconciled with Christ by the mediation of the Thomists; Hellenism with Christianity, through scholasticism; and the old diffuse hospitality of Dante, in the yet genial shades of the First Circle, to Aristotle's "philosophic family," is now estopped by family feuds. Averroes, who made the great Commentary, has had his Commentary flung aside, and, lying prone beneath the feet of the canonized Dominican schoolman, he confesses his associates by his badge. Greek learning,

whether of Aristotle or Plato, has immediate access to Christian Schools, independent of the "carriers" who had conveyed it. Meanwhile the overthrow of Averroes, representing his company of scholars, his *parage*, in the old chivalric phrase, is sufficient testimony to the place which they had filled. Their degradation is the measure of their achievement.

§ 2. AVICEBRON.

Solomon ibn Gabirol, of Malaga, the Hebrew poet and philologer, and the Arabic-writing philosopher of the eleventh century, whose identity with Avicebron of the Schools was established by Solomon Munk in 1846, is among the earliest of those unbelieving carriers. His contribution to learning brings us at once into contact with John Milton, the greatest mind of the Renaissance in modern Europe. Gabirol died in 1070, Milton in 1674, and it may be said with exact truth that they were united across the six centuries—a period as long as from the Black Death till today—by their common inferences from the Ptolemaic cosmogony to the Divine government of the universe. Ptolemy, as recorded above, was the Egyptian astronomer whom Dante included in Aristotle's "philosophic family." His system held till it was overthrown by the successive evidence and labours of Copernicus (1473-1543) and Galileo (1564-1642).

Milton himself in 1638 had visited Galileo, finding him "grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought"; but not even Milton, in Galileo's century, adopted the Copernican system in substitution for the Ptolemaic, when he was constructing his epic of earth and heaven. He knew it, much as Tennyson knew the Darwinian hypothesis in his own day, but he took from the Franciscan and Dominican licensers the cosmic scheme which ibn Gabirol and his followers had conveyed to them.

This likeness in outlook on the universe between the Spanish Jew of the eleventh century and the English Hebraist of the seventeenth may best be illustrated by quotation. We select for this purpose ibn Gabirol's *Keter Malchuth* ("The Royal Crown"; a long hymn still included in the liturgy of Sephardic Jews), and Milton's *Paradise Lost*; and we may start with the closing verses of Milton's description of those who, wrongly seeking heaven, fell into the limbo of "the Paradise of Fools":

"And they who, to be sure of Paradise,
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.
They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talked, and that first moved" (iii. 478-83).

The seven planetary spheres, the sphere of the fixed stars, the crystalline sphere, and the *primum*

mobile, are the ten spheres of all the poets who, however exalted their moral law, wrote in terms of the old physics and astronomy. We find them in Gabirol's hymn, right up to the tenth:

"For Thou hast exalted above the ninth sphere the sphere of Intelligence."

Take from the end of the same Book of *P. L.*:

"Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous elements—Earth, Flood, Air, Fire;
And this ethereal quintessence of Heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That rolled orbicular, and turned to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move:
Each had his place appointed, each his course;
The rest in circuit walls this Universe" (iii. 714-21);

and compare it with a stanza from Gabirol:

"Who shall utter Thy mighty deeds,
For Thou madest a division of the ball of the earth into
twain, half dry land, half water,
And didst surround the water with the sphere of air,
In which the wind turneth and turneth in its fury,
And resteth in its circuits,
And didst encompass the air with the sphere of fire,
And the foundations of these four elements are but one
foundation.
And their sources one,
And from it they issue and are renewed."

Or compare Book VII., 346-86, with stanza xvii. of the *Keter Malchuth*, particularly Milton's moon,

"Less bright the Moon,
But opposite in levelled West was set,
His mirror, with full face borrowing her light
From him; for other light she needed none
In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
Till night" . . .

with Gabirol's:

"As she moves away to stand opposite the Sun,
She receiveth his shining,
Until his light is at the full when she stands before him,
And it irradiates her whole face"* . . .

A like physics make a like metaphysics, and the so-called metaphysical or fantastic poets of the seventeenth century are ultimately indebted, through Milton and the French Huguenot, Du Bartas (1544-1590), for some of their jewels of thought and diction, to the tradition set by ibn Gabirol, not merely in ingenious rhymes and words, but in the processes of intimate vision, which are so frequently allied to or evoked by that special skill. Dante, we may take it, knew his own masters: it has even been conjectured, as we observed above, that he owed more to Moslem and Jewish doctors than research has so far revealed, and students of literature are aware of a linked chain of succession between the Florentine Catholic of the thirteenth century and the English Puritan in the seventeenth. In order to establish the links, we should have to return to Pico della Mirandola and the Platonic Academy in Florence, to the neo-Platonists behind it and the Cambridge Platonists in front, and we might find that our inquiry led us to the prophetic ecstasies—literally, the enthusiasm—

* The translations are by Israel Zangwill; Philadelphia, 1923.

of Shelley and Wordsworth. All this is wrapped up in the mists of the hills behind Dante, who, as we say, knew his own masters, and recognized them in Aristotle's "philosophic family," of whom ibn Gabirol was a member. "Aristotle," the diffused Aristotle, Aristotle Ltd., as we might designate the mixed tradition of the Stagirite which was carried down to the schoolmen, supplied the physics of this philosophy, and Plato, similarly combined to a company of Platonic writers, may be said to have supplied the metaphysics. Aristotle and Plato between them, before their canons were fixed, and long before Aldus Manutius in Venice sifted them through his new printing-presses, stood to lay learning as a twin adventure, as beacon-lights at the end of a dark journey, the *selva oscura* of the second line of Dante's epic. The new Hebrew University at Jerusalem, with its unique opportunities for the pursuit of Hebrew and Arabic studies, should be instrumental in time to come in letting light into this darkness. That the spirit of adventure was repressed, particularly in the Albigensian Crusade, and that the laymen were dropped, like a pilot, when the freight had been conveyed to the Schools, are facts of history less to our immediate purpose than this investigation of the forces behind Dante, which passed into the heritage of his successors. The written thought of Europe owes much to those whom we

have designated the first keepers of the conscience of scholarship. They are, in fact, of little account today. The dark wood of the Middle Ages lies so completely in our rear, the shining lights of Hellenism are so completely unveiled, that it is hardly even an office of piety to spend much time with the foreign merchant-venturers in Aristotelian and Platonic speculation, who vexed Pope Innocent III., and provoked him at the Fourth Lateran Council to distinguish the Jew and Moslem from the Christian, just founding his teaching Orders of Preaching Friars. Yet they claim their rights in our possession, their contribution to our enjoyment. By their pains is our tranquillity. They receive a line, a word, a bare mention, an "also ran" in our text-books: but they gave life, health, strength, ardour, faith, and their merit does not lie in their names. Take, for instance, a few pieces of evidence, selected from non-Jewish authorities, as to the value of Jewish service in this respect.

(1) "When we think of the medieval Jew in relation to literature we are apt to remember the tragedy of Lincoln, as rehearsed in the *Canterbury Tales*, to brand in our imagination the unholy Israelite as the incarnation of all that is bad—the black beast of a black time." (So well, we may submit in parenthesis, did Innocent III. fulfil his aim.) "In the Middle Age, however, literature owed much to the Jew," and

our witness* proceeds to quote from a French scholar of the mid-nineteenth century, M. Adolphe L. de Puibusque:

(2) "Ces hommes sans patrie ont rempli l'office d'agents de communication entre toutes les nations de l'ancien monde; ils ont suppléé par leur activité à l'inertie des populations musulmanes et devancé le mouvement propagateur de l'imprimerie; après avoir fait circuler de proche en proche les traditions antiques dans les littératures orientales ils les ont introduites en Occident par des versions soit en latin soit en langue vulgaire;" and he refers finally to what he calls "the splendid achievements of the Jewish moralists in Spain."

(3) The same writer in another book† includes in his list of Dante's sources "medieval translations of Aristotle," and we know now by whom these were effected.

(4) With special reference to Plato: "Plato the prophet lived on in the speculation of theologians, the inspiration of poets, and the lives of religious men, Pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Moslem, . . . till in the latter half of the fifteenth century, with the formation of the Platonic Academy at Florence, his personality became the object of a cult to which zeal for the new learning, love of earthly beauty, and love of heavenly beauty, all gave fervour. Plato's Dialogues . . . now began to be read in the West, and, while they influenced philosophy and

* F. J. Snell, *The Fourteenth Century*, Edinburgh, 1899.

† *Handbook to Dante*, London, 1909.

theology chiefly, also influenced poetry by adding volume and weight to a stream of 'Platonism,' which could be traced back beyond Dante, and . . . was to flow on through Italian, French, and English love-poetry—Spenser's, Sidney's, Shakespeare's, Jonson's, Drummond's, Donne's—till at last it was lost in the influence of other waters."*

We could summon other witnesses to this bar, but perhaps enough has been quoted to substantiate the evidence adduced in the last section as to Jews, in a cultural sense, being the first Europeans. That general remark is fined down to the immediate perception that, by their contribution to Greek studies, particularly philosophical, they preserved the series of writings, known as Aristotle and Plato, from extinction or decay, and were enabled, in their religious independence, to strengthen the moral content of their own doctrines by fibres drawn from pagan thought. True, they paid for their daring by incurring, like Philo and Spinoza, the suspicion and even the resentment of their own kin, and the increased vigilance of the guardians of Christianity. But ibn Gabirol, with his successors, to whom we are coming, stands out among medieval Jews, not as hawker, money-lender, or even heretic, but as a pioneer of the advancement of learning in the eleventh century, adding exalted

* Prof. J. A. Stewart, "Platonism in English Poetry," *English Literature and the Classics*, Oxford, 1912.

poems to the Hebrew liturgy, and immensely influencing by his Arabic *Fountain of Life*, translated into Latin as *Fons Vitæ*, the scholastic Platonism of Duns Scotus and William of Auvergne. Even Giordano Bruno, in the sixteenth century, could not omit reference to "the Moor, Avicebron," who was the Jew of Malaga, Solomon ibn Gabirol, in the line of ascent from Saadiah to the Reformation.

§ 3. JEHUDAH HALEVI.

The Jews in the early Middle Ages were victims of a double exile. In their places of exile from Jerusalem they shared in the common exile of cultured men from the sources of scholarship and philosophy. This desire for social fellowship on the one part and for the freedom of learning on the other was least inadequately satisfied, as we have seen, in certain Spanish cities at that date. Studious Jews and Arabs worked together to further secular enlightenment. But inevitably the advancing Cross, which was driving the infidels out of Spain, ultimately spread to unbelievers in that country the darkness which covered them abroad. The light of Christianity was for the faithful: to the rest it brought destruction and damnation; and its doom of social exclusion fell most heavily on those who were intellectually most free.

Out of this double exile a resolute way of escape was devised by Jehudah Halevi, who felt its incidence very keenly. He reasoned himself out of mental darkness, and he sang himself into Zion. He was at once philosopher and poet. He wrote, in Arabic, a prose dialogue, *Kitab al-Khazari*, or, more precisely, a series of five dialogues, on the philosophy of Judaism, founded, as the title indicates, on the old, romantic, historic legend of a Jewish kingdom of the Chazars, which drew Hasdai ibn Shaprut, as we saw, to dream in the tenth century of exchanging the splendours of Cordova for the rigours of the Crimea; and he wrote, in Hebrew, prayers and poems, and poems which were prayers, the constant burden of which was the nostalgia of the Jew—his love and longing for Jerusalem. Intellectually, therefore, he rose above the timidities and controversies of an unenlightened day to the height, where liberty dwells, of philosophic discourse; and, as a Jew, excluded, though in a less degree than his co-religionists abroad, from complete freedom of human intercourse, he created in his poetry the conditions forbidden to social experience. "This voice sang me free," Halevi's fellow-Jews might have said of him, as Sir William Watson has finely said of Wordsworth. But he did not stop at singing others free. That was not enough of freedom for his own contentment. He, too, would be free of Zion, and we

learn, hardly with surprise, that when, at about fifty-five years of age, he was left a widower with an only daughter and a beloved grandson, he went alone on the long trek to Palestine. In Alexandria, Cairo and Damietta, his own people rejoiced over him, but they could not persuade him to abandon the perils of his enterprise. For though Jerusalem in the twelfth century was the Crusaders' goal, yet that novel phase of the old city, with its dire consequences to Jews in the raids of licentious soldiery and the demands of extortionate army-providers, was counted but as a day in her sacred tale of Jewish history. "She whom the Rabbis loved," wrote Heine—himself, though apostate, a Jew,—“was a moving picture of desolation, and her name was Jerusalem”; and Halevi's love-poems to Jerusalem, and his middle-aged pilgrimage to the home of his beloved, have been aptly compared by his chief translator* with Swinburne's tribute to “a singer in France of old,” who loved one woman only in his lifetime:

“And finding life for her love's sake fail,
Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,
Touched land, and saw her, as life grew cold,
And praised God, seeing; and so died he.”

So, in 1140, Halevi saw Jerusalem, and so, at last, he died, in solitary enjoyment of the freedom which he had communicated in song.

* Mrs. R. N. Salaman, in the Loeb Classics, Philadelphia, 1924. I have ventured to avail myself of this version of *Selected Poems of Jehudah Halevi* in the present section.

It is not easy to Europeanize Jewish experience, or to write Jewish history in common terms. These stories of Philo and Hasdai, of Gabirol and Halevi, of Maimonides and even of Spinoza, to both of whom we shall come, present features unique in historiography. Jerusalem haunted their dreams, and Rome, pagan or Christian, distracted their waking activities. Their stories are continuous. They add up to a sum of achievement, which adorns the successive eras of a civilization which consistently cast them out. But it is difficult to see them clearly through the dreamland in which they lived and wrought. The Western world has its poets and philosophers in the long post-Renaissance line, and we cannot evade the question: Is it worth while to disinter these exotic names from the darkness which blotted out their day-time and the neglect which their language invites? It may be correct, as we have indicated, to call them reformers in advance of the Reformation, and to say that they preserved, transmitted, and even enhanced, by their diligence and zeal, the scholarship and letters which flourished in the sixteenth century. But, acknowledging this service, may we not reasonably pass it by on the ground that there was too little Rome and too much Jerusalem in their complex? Or are they, on the contrary, essential to historical studies, in the sense that we cannot fully apprehend the later literature of Spain

without rendering account of these early Jewish contributions? Do the pathos and romance of Halevi's life compel others than his co-religionists to retrace his path from Palestine, where his footprints were lost, back to Toledo, Granada, and Cordova, where he lived as philosopher and poet? The answer depends, of course, on evidence derived from the later literature. A leading historian* of that literature, on whose unbiased judgment we may lean, assures us that the intellectual movement, which led to the Spanish renaissance, "recommençait chez les Juifs," and that to Halevi expressly is due "un des premiers tâtonnements"—one of the earliest experimental gropings—"de la métrique espagnole." So far the evidence is helpful towards establishing the Jewish claim. It encourages us to venture a step further on our road back from Jerusalem to Spain, where Jewish thinkers in the Hebrew Arcady taught the schoolmen their first lessons in philosophy, and Jewish poets left their imprint on European letters. We can appreciate with Halevi's editors the deep yearning which is expressed in the opening words of his great ode: "Zion, wilt thou not ask if Peace be with thy exiles that seek thy Peace?" but for a complete understanding of the *form* as well as the content of this poem we have to read ourselves out of the

* James Fitzmaurice Kelly, *Littérature espagnole*, Paris, 1913; p. 4.

Hebrew renaissance in the first half of the twelfth century into the renaissance of Spanish literature in the middle of the sixteenth. We do not propose in this brief essay to examine the foundations of that revival, due partly to native genius and partly to foreign example, or to attempt to hold the scales even between those who praise and those who blame the influence of the Church on secular culture in Spain. What we must do, however, if we are to find any answer to our question at all, is to take a typical example of the intellectual movement, which was developed on Spanish soil, and to see how far, if at all, it revealed—or concealed: it is the same thing—traces of Jewish influence. We select for this purpose Luis Ponce de Leon, a poet and philosopher of the sixteenth century, partly because he belongs in time to the period of the new movement, partly because his writings are in the same class as those of Halevi, his Jewish prototype nearly five hundred years before, and partly because we have the advantage of a recent monograph on de Leon by an English critic,* who may be described as rather less than more friendly to the Jews.

First, generally, as to the Spanish renaissance and the Jews. We are told that the Spanish people in this age “had always been, and still

* Aubrey F. G. Bell, *Luis de Leon : A Study of the Spanish Renaissance*, Oxford, 1925.

was, essentially Catholic," that the Inquisition, preserving this essential character, "allowed the Spanish to sleep in peace," and that its task was comparatively light. "Apart from a few Hebrew scholars," we are assured—and the phrase reminds us of a famous passage in Sir Walter Scott,* "it would be difficult to give a single name of a well-known man of letters or science, who suffered seriously at the hands of the Spanish Inquisition." Erasmus had said in 1531 that Spain was as full of Jews as Germany was full of robbers, but perhaps the traveller-humanist was unaware how easily the Inquisition had dealt with a similar menace from the Protestants. "A couple of *autos da fé* at Valladolid, at the principal of which two persons only were burnt alive, and another two at Seville," had sufficed to crush out the first signs of Protestantism between 1540 and 1560, and "the Holy Office of the Inquisition, established to deal with the Jews, was as much a political as a religious institution," and might be expected to deal with them not less expeditiously. However, they presented a "tremendous problem." Somehow, they were not quite as quick to burn out. A sensitive Archbishop had remarked that "public opinion might forgive a man who was of Moorish origin, but not one who was in the slightest suspicion of having Jewish blood in his

* See Note 7.

veins." Still, such was the business of the Inquisition, and these minimizing and extenuating views are plainly intended to warn us not to emphasize either the debt of the Spanish renaissance to Jewish influence, or the harshness of the Holy Office, whether as a religious or a political institution. Perhaps a "few Hebrew scholars" were but a little price to pay in order that the Spanish might sleep in peace; and even if the *autos da fé* of Jews, which were to purify Spanish orthodoxy from Jewish infection, were not so poorly furnished with victims as the Protestant shows at Valladolid and Seville, well, so much the merrier for the populace in a country plaguily full of infidels.

We pause at a single count in this apology. We are assured on the same authority that the general effect of the Inquisition was "not repression of thought, but the utmost freedom in its expression," and we turn now from this dictum to the record of Luis de Leon, who was incarcerated in cells of the Inquisition from March 27, 1572, to September 28, 1576. De Leon's crime, unforgivable by the Church, was his Jewish blood, derived from a great-grandmother, who had been "reconciled," as they called it, in 1512, twenty years after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. This counted against him when he was tried for employing Hebrew texts and Rabbinical commentaries to elucidate

the Vulgate Bible in his lectures at Salamanca University, and it did not help him that St. Jerome had done the same. We leave it at that. We are discussing the contribution, not the persecution, of the Jews. It has been necessary, however, to refer to de Leon's experience in order to test his obligation as poet, and the obligation of Spanish poetry as a whole, not by the anti-Jewish acts of Spain's politico-religious rulers, but by the influence which they burnt out. "Le mouvement intellectuel recommençait chez les Juifs." The Jews were expelled in 1492, and Spaniards with Jewish blood in their veins were objects of suspicion in the ensuing sixteenth century. The question left for critics is, How far, if at all, the Spanish renaissance in that century was indebted to the intellectual movement in the twelfth, the descendants of the founders of which, with their memories and works, were completely obliterated on political and religious grounds?

We propose to try to answer this question by the evidence of de Leon himself, not relying for this purpose on the Jewish body of his great-grandmother, but rather on the Hebrew soul, which an historian* of Spanish literature discovers in him. The soul of de Leon, Hebrew or not, lived on, it is universally admitted, in the Spanish poets and romancers who came after

* Ticknor, ii. 87.

him, and passed, by the freedom of letters, to Klopstock, Milton, and Wordsworth. So big a force in European literature is worth pursuing to its native fastnesses; and, however high the wall which the Catholic Church and Castilian pride built against "foreign heresies and foreign manners" in the epoch of de Leon's lifetime, we are to remember that the poet was born within forty years of the expulsion of the Jews, and that these had been native to Spain for at least half a millennium. Thus, the native school* of Spanish poetry had access to founts of Hebrew writers resident in Spain prior to 1492. It is even pertinent to this context to observe a certain similarity in outward circumstances between the lives of Halevi and de Leon. Each was philosopher as well as poet. Each acknowledged an intellectual affinity with philological students of Holy Writ, and each was fearless in his welcome to such enlarged resources of interpretation. Each, in another aspect, was a nature-poet, even a nature-worshipper, susceptible to the serenity of stars at night and to the awe and vastness of the sea, in a degree which may fairly be termed

* There was a distinct Italianate school, which may be dated from 1526, when Juan Boscan, tutor to the Duke of Alba, met Andrea Navagero, the Venetian ambassador, at Granada. But this is another story. The point is that the Hebrew manner was native, not "foreign," in the sense of the intention in the quotation above from A. F. G. Bell, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Wordsworthian. We may note, too, though less pertinently, that de Leon, in one of his Latin commentaries, declared that the enemies of the Jews "do not only oppress those who are sinners among that people, but often they likewise oppress the just and the good, and, moreover, when they oppress the sinners, they do so, not for hate of the sin, but for hate of the individuals themselves and of their religion"; and more boldly still, in another of his Latin writings, he foretold that "the faithful out of Judaism" would replace before the world's end evil-doers among the conventional *fideles*.

We may now come back from Jerusalem to Spain, and try to evaluate Halevi's muse, not in relation to his place in Zion, but in relation to his place in Europe. With this object we may neglect his Hebrew tongue. Milton wrote his lover's litany in Latin, and Hebrew even more was a living language. Take, then, in Mrs. Salaman's literal rendering, some verses from "the singer's reply to one who reproved him for his longing to go to the Land of Israel":

"Let not the wisdom of the Greeks beguile thee,
Which hath no fruit, but only flowers—
Or her fruit is, that the earth was never outstretched,
Nor the tents of the sky spread out,
Nor was any beginning to all the work of creation,
Nor will any end be to the renewal of the months . . .
Wherefore, then, should I seek me out crooked ways.
And forsake the mother of paths?"

Take, again, on his way to the land of Israel, where creation had a beginning and matter had an end, the poet's vision of the moment when the waves are stilled,

"Like flocks spread abroad upon the field; . . .
The face of the waters and the face of the heavens, the
infinity of sea,
The infinity of night, are grown pure, are made clear,
And the sea appeareth as a firmament—
Then are they two seas bound up together;
And between them in my heart, a third sea,
Lifting up ever anew my waves of praise."

The adept of the muse will recognize the modernness of Halevi's note, and will incline to believe that his poems, though not represented in the *Oxford Book of Spanish Verse*, must have found their way into the consciousness of the poets of his country who came after him. He groped his way, as we have been told, to Spanish music, and set a process not unlike that by which Italian poetry in Florence opened out of experiments in Latin.

And at last, take, finally, a few stanzas, in Mrs. Salaman's rhymed rendering, from Halevi's great "Ode to Zion." Read them for form as well as content, and a comparison with de Leon in the epoch of the renaissance in Spain may establish the Hebrew writer's undying claim to a place in the succession of Spanish poets and to a share in the making of the songs of Europe. We read:

“Zion, wilt thou not ask if peace’s wing
Shadows the captives that ensue thy peace,
Left lonely from thine ancient shepherding ?

Lo ! west and east and north and south—world-wide—
All these from far and near, without surcease,
Salute thee : Peace and Peace from every side ;

And Peace from him that from the captive’s fount
Of tears is giving his, like Hermon’s dew,
And longing but to shed them on thy mount. . . .

Lo ! it shall pass, shall change, the heritage
Of vain-crown’d kingdoms ; not all time subdues
Thy strength ; thy crown endures from age to age. . . .

Happy is he that waiteth :—he shall go
To thee, and thine arising radiance see
When over him shall break thy morning glow ;

And see rest for thy chosen ; and sublime
Rejoicing find amid the joy of thee
Returned unto thine olden youthful time.”

We must forgo the pleasure of adducing extensive proof of de Leon’s likeness to Halevi. Flowers of de Leon will be found in the appendix to Mr. A. F. G. Bell’s book, cited above, and in any anthology of Spanish verse. But remembering, first, that in both instances we are relying on translation, and, secondly, that, whereas Halevi sought his New Jerusalem in the Old, de Leon found his whole desire in the New, the same piercing cry comes from each. De Leon, too, rose from earth to heaven, and appealed in tears for the peace of the Kingdom which endures:

“O skyward lift your eyes
Unto this heavenly eternal sphere !
And you will then despise
The vain delights that here
Offers our life, its every hope and fear ;
Petty, if we compare
The fleeting span of this low earthly scene
With that great region where
In noblest forms are seen
What is and what shall be and what hath been. . . .
Lo, here dwells sweet content,
Peace reigns, and on a rich and lofty throne
Sits holy love, and blent
Together in its zone
Delight and honour are evermore at one.”

There are differences, of course. The poet who died in 1591 would not write precisely in the strain of the poet who died in 1140. Four and a half centuries stretched between them, and of Seeley's three ties of nationality—common language, common religion, and common interest—only the last was theirs, and the Jews were deprived of that in 1492. Still, the likeness transcends the differences. Jehudah Halevi, the Spanish-Jewish poet, and author of Arabic dialogues on philosophy, turned his steps to the east as a Jew and his muse to the west as a Spaniard. We cannot leave him wrapped in Hebrew cerements. His is no still voice in a dead tongue. Once we make acquaintance with Halevi, we yield him beyond dispute a place among the fathers of lyric poetry.

§ 4. MAIMONIDES.

Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides) was born at Cordova in 1135—the exact day is known: March 30—and died at Cairo in 1204. The dates are significant. First, they correspond very closely with those of Averroes, 1126-1198, whose similar services to philosophic studies we have noted above. Next, contemporary with Averroes and Maimonides, twin members of Aristotle's "family," was Aaron of Lincoln, the English money-lender, who died in 1186. Thirdly, we may repeat here for reference that the Albigensian Crusade in Languedoc (Southern France) was preached in 1208 by Pope Innocent III., who, in 1215, imposed the badge of shame on all Moslems and Jews.

It is an odd collocation. Within little more than fifty years, from about the middle of the twelfth century, chords which still reverberate in modern poetry were struck by Jehudah Halevi, who was lost in the hills of Palestine. Maimonides rivalled Averroes in his influence on Scholasticism and the reconciliation of Hellenism and the Orient. The Pope of Rome put a mark of ignominy on every follower of Judaism and Islam; and, in England, "an announcement that must have caused the gravest anxiety in many a grange and castle was that of the death of the great money-lender, Aaron of Lincoln,

accompanied as it was by the formal intimation that the King had declared himself Aaron's heir. Aaron had heavy mortgages in every county of England, which the King would endeavour to call in. That was the worst of dealing with the Israelites," adds the unbiased historian,* "that behind the Jew stood the King."

We have to find a way through this confusion, and a safe clue may be sought by tying up two of the loose ends. In Provence, the land of sun and song, the Troubadours packed up their lutes, and fled before the invading Frenchman to Sicily and the Italian mainland. Provence, neighbourly to Spain, in Marseilles, Montpellier, and other cities, had been hospitable to her Jews, who enjoyed equal rights with their fellows. It was one of the consequences of the Crusade against free thinking and open speaking that Jews and Arabs who had contributed to that renaissance were put to special shame. The same Pope who had preached the Crusade now inflicted the penalty. Behind the English Jew stood the King, and behind the King stood the Pope. It was an irresistible combination; no Jew could flourish in that shadow. Duke William in 1066 encouraged the Jews of Normandy to employ their movable goods to develop the country of his conquest,

* Sir James H. Ramsay of Banff, *A History of the Revenues of the Kings of England: 1066-1399*. Oxford, 1925; vol. i., p. 172.

and to help him plant Saxon England with Norman castles and cathedrals. The King and his successors protected their Jews: "a dangerous protection," Stubbs calls it, and so it proved in a little more than two centuries. The Jews settled in country and town, in York, Stamford, Lincoln, Norwich, Bristol, Oxford, etc., as well as London. They founded synagogues and schools. They studied *Torah* and Talmud. They produced scholars and even saints. They intermarried with their English countryfolk. But gradually, surely, they fell behind. The protection was too close to be comfortable. They did their appointed task, and their protector, using them as a screen, treated them as Fledgeby treated Riah.* He protected them with one hand, and squeezed them with the other. "Their unpopularity," we are assured, "is not sufficiently explained by the statement that, while the King pillaged them, he permitted them to pillage the Christian population: it was rather because, in order to gain protection for themselves, they were obliged to make themselves the means by which the King pillaged the nation."† A harsh necessity, and it is impossible not to link up the fate of the Jews in England with the policy

* See Note 8.

† Sir William J. Ashley, *Introduction to English Economic Theory and Practice*, Part I.: The Middle Ages. London, 11th edition, 1923; 210 f. See, too, G. G. Coulton, *The Medieval Village*, Cambridge, 1925; p. 286.

of Pope Innocent in estopping liberalism in Languedoc. In 1066, when ibn Gabirol was alive, and twenty years before Halevi was born, the Conqueror used the Jews as his fiscal weapon: "They undoubtedly facilitated the important fiscal changes which were carried out in the period succeeding the Norman Conquest."* In 1186, when Maimonides was alive, King Henry II. automatically became Aaron's heir, and every county of England was pillaged by the monarch in the Jew's name. In 1286 Pope Honorius IV., in a letter to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, reaffirmed and intensified the decisions of Innocent III. in 1215. The "accursed and perfidious Jews" were roundly denounced. Their sacred writings were condemned; their efforts to recover converts were anathematized; and it was said to cast "opprobrium on the majesty of God" that a Christian should enter the service of a Jew. In that letter, or at the Synod of Exeter held in the following year, intercourse between the two communities was forbidden; Jews were forbidden to appear in public at Easter, to practise medicine, to build new synagogues, and so forth; and the authorities were warned "to rise up with ready courage against such audacity, in order that it may be completely suppressed and confounded, and that the dignity

* W. Cunningham, *Essay on Western Civilization in its Economic Aspects*, Cambridge, 1904; p. 88.

and glory of the Catholic Faith may increase." But there could be no further increase of the King's revenue from the Jews. The hand that squeezed was exhausted, and the hand that protected was relaxed. The expulsion of the Jews in 1290 was the inevitable sequel to the Crusade against the Albigenses ninety years before.

We have wandered away from Maimonides, who himself, like so many Jews, was condemned to wandering, finding finally in Egypt a refuge from the unrest in his native Spain. But it has seemed not improper to view him in his Jewish environment, with night spreading across the sky, and thus to appreciate more clearly the contrast between the conditions of Moses in Cordova and Aaron in Lincoln. The muse of history is aware that it is in the nature of special pleading to remark that Maimonides wrote: "The teachings of Christ, and of Mohammed who arose after him, tend to bring to perfection all mankind, so that they may serve God with one consent," and that Pope Innocent III., a year or two later, put a badge of shame on Moslems and Jews. But, though history cannot be rewritten so as to turn night into day, or the Jewish darkness decreed by Rome into the light setting on Jews in Spain, yet the facts of history may be recorded in the juxtaposition in which they occurred, and the conclusions may be left to common judgment.

We may conclude from evidences of papal policy that, if conditions in Andalusia and Provence had been repeated in our own country in the twelfth century, the Norman-Jewish settlement might have led to a renaissance such as theirs. For here, too, were Jewish scholars and physicians, and Jews who cultivated a gentle life. We may deem, too, that the continuity of papal policy is the key, or, at least, a clue, to the continuous decline of Jewish fortunes in the centuries punctuated by expulsions; and, lastly, we may see that this extraneous punctuation of the page of Jewish history is a less important feature than what the Jews themselves inscribed upon it.

The chief work written by Maimonides is the Arabic *Dalalat al-Hairin*, which was translated into Hebrew, under the title of *Moreh Nebuchim*, by Samuel ibn Tibbon, at Lunel, in Provence, during the author's life-time. As a fact, this version was completed in November, 1204, just a fortnight before Maimonides died, and the translator had enjoyed the great advantage of corresponding with the author about his task. One of these letters has been preserved, and, though not strictly relevant to our purpose, it throws so interesting a light on the life of the great scholar that a few extracts may be welcome. It was written in 1199, in reply to a suggestion by ibn Tibbon, who was an eminent member of a family of translators, that he should visit Mai-

monides in Egypt. The offer was declined: "I truly long to converse with you," wrote the sage, "and should anticipate our meeting with even more pleasure than you. But I must advise you not to expose yourself to the perils of the voyage, for really you would derive no advantage from your visit. I never have an hour to spare for intellectual conversation, either by night or by day. The following is my daily round. I live in Mizr (Fostat), and the Sultan resides at Cairo, two Sabbath-days' journey away. My duties to the Sultan are very heavy"; and then, after detailing his medical service to the Sultan and his Court, and stating that he arrives home "dying with hunger," Maimonides proceeds: "I find my antechamber thronged with people, both Jews and Gentiles, nobles and common people, judges and bailiffs, friends and foes—a mixed multitude, awaiting me." He snatches a hasty meal, "the only one in the twenty-four hours," and then attends to his patients, sometimes into a late hour of the night. "I converse with them and prescribe for them while lying down from sheer fatigue." His only leisure for talk is on the Sabbath. "On that day the whole congregation, or at least the majority of its members, come to me after Morning Service, when I instruct them as to their proceedings during the whole week. We study together till a little before noon, when they depart. Some of

them come back and read with me after Afternoon Service until Evening Prayers. In this manner I spend that day. I have here related to you only a part of what you would see if you were to visit me." It was a strenuous life, more particularly for an elderly man who had spent many years in enforced travel, and, in accordance with Jewish scruple, had refused to make the *Torah* his staff of life, but had earned a living at certain periods in less congenial trades than that of medicine.

Returning now to his chief work, the *Moreh Nebuchim*: there were two Hebrew versions; an early Latin one, *Dux Neutorum*; an Italian one, in 1583; an important French one by S. Munk, 1856-66; and several German versions, including one by A. Weiss, 1924. The standard English translation is by M. Friedländer (second edition, 1904), who rendered it from the original Arabic text; and the book is known in all languages as *The Guide for the Perplexed*. It was so called, said the author in a letter to one of his pupils, because its object is "to enlighten a religious man who has been trained to believe in the truth of our holy Law, who conscientiously fulfils his moral and religious duties, and at the same time has been successful in his philosophical studies." It is not a beginner's book. "Human reason has attracted" its ideal reader "to abide within its sphere, and he finds it difficult to accept as

correct" (these words are significant in their place and time) "teaching based on the literal interpretations of the Law." There are expressions which Maimonides defines as "homonymous, metaphorical, or hybrid," and which cause "perplexity and anxiety." The pure rationalist might conclude "that he had rejected the fundamental principles of the Law; and even if he retains his opinions which were derived from those expressions, and if, instead of following his reason, he abandons its guidance altogether, it would still appear that his religious convictions had suffered loss and injury." For he would be left with the same doubts that had caused perplexedness. There were, further, Maimonides pointed out, "certain obscure figures which occur in the Prophets, and are not distinctly characterized as being figures. Ignorant and superficial readers take them in a literal, not a figurative, sense. Even well-informed persons are bewildered if they understand these passages in their literal signification, but they are entirely relieved of their perplexity when we explain the figure, or merely suggest that the terms are figurative. For this reason," he adds, "I have called this book a *Guide for the Perplexed*."

The significance of this preface is obvious. We may look back from it to Philo in Alexandria, even to the Karaites in Babylonia, and to Saadiah, who bettered their teachings; we may look

forward from it to Luis de Leon, the head and front of whose offence against his Church was his philological study of Solomon's canticle, or, earlier, to such textual critics as Lorenzo Valla in the fifteenth century, who was a direct herald of the Reformation; and through all these centuries we shall see the thread of rationalism in the study of Holy Writ, increasing in size and importance despite the constant opposition of authority. But, apprehending this continuity, we may look forward beyond the Reformation. The conflict of science and faith, which is at the root of Maimonides' great treatise, is still alive even today, and it was very much alive in a very recent yesterday. We need not rehearse the battles which followed the challenge flung down by Darwin in 1859, but we may very properly compare something written in 1873 with these words written by Maimonides exactly seven hundred years before. Whether or not Matthew Arnold had read the *Guide for the Perplexed* cannot be proved, but in his *Literature and Dogma* he was still urging, in the spirit and almost in the words of the Hebrew rationalist: "The language of the Bible is literary, not scientific, language; language thrown out at an object of consciousness, not fully grasped, which inspires emotion. Evidently, if the object be one not fully to be grasped, and one to inspire emotion, the language of figure and feeling will satisfy us better about it, will cover

more of what we seek to express, than the language of literal fact and science.”* So great a labour it was to build what Maimonides essayed—a synthesis between Hellenism and Hebraism, between philosophy and religion.

This section might be endlessly expanded, and we have still to record Maimonides’ twelve years’ work at his *Deutero-Torah*, the Hebrew treatise, *Mishne Torah*, or “Strong Hand,” *Yad ha-Chazakah*. But a longer exposition would bring us back to the same point. “It happened to Moses Maimonides,” writes Friedländer, “what in modern times happened to Moses Mendelssohn,” and to him we shall come in a later chapter. The conclusions drawn from “figurative” and “literal” language, the rational explanation of anthropomorphism, the exaltation of the study of philosophy, that old proscribed “wisdom of the Greeks,” fitted in exactly with the pursuit of heresy. Some ultra-pious rabbis made common cause with the Dominicans. The *Moreh Nebuchim* was publicly burnt in Paris (1233), anticipating the act of the same Order in the era of Reuchlin at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and, when the cloud of that smoke had died down, the Jews whom Maimonides would have enlightened continued their wonted studies. Their

* It will repay curiosity to compare Arnold’s two Prefaces to *Literature and Dogma* with the prefatory letter to the *Guide for the Perplexed*.

guide through the night of the Middle Ages was the pillar of fire, not the pillar of cloud: the centrifugal, not the centripetal, force. But the permanent value of Maimonides is independent of his temporary fate and influence, and of the inevitable misunderstanding even of his own disciples. He ascends to Spinoza, and descends through him to the deists and rationalists of the eighteenth century, and so to the making of the modern mind; and perhaps the last word in this long chapter may fitly be left to Sir Frederick Pollock, who does not hesitate in his appreciation of "the Jewish doctors of the Middle Ages who brought a philosophical treatment to bear upon theological problems." For this, after all, is the root-matter by which civilization stands or falls.

"Partly coinciding in time with Catholic scholasticism," we read,* "but with their rise and culminating period nearly a century earlier, a series of Jewish philosophers in Spain, Provence, and the East did work which has a far more important place in the general history of philosophy than has commonly been allowed to it. The task they set themselves was the same in

* *Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy*, by Sir Frederick Pollock, Bt., 2nd edition, Oxford, 1899; p. 88. Abraham ibn Ezra, 1092-1167, grammarian, philosopher, and poet, is noticed in our next chapter. It should be observed that many of these Hebraists made notable additions to the Hebrew liturgy.

kind as that of the schoolmen, who, in spite of religious difference, joined hands with them on the common ground of Aristotle, and used their work with open acknowledgment and respect. They strove, in one word, to systematize theology on an Aristotelian footing. For this purpose it was necessary to embark on a critical and philosophical interpretation of Scripture; and in this undertaking the comparatively undefined character of Jewish orthodoxy secured them a certain amount of freedom. Or rather philosophy presented itself to Jewish speculation as an enlightened interpretation of the hidden meaning of the law. Thus, Moses ben Maimon and ibn Ezra were leaders in biblical criticism no less than in philosophy. The ideas they put forward in this field were to be carried to their full development in the *Traġtatus Theologico-Politicus*—which, again, was the contribution of a Jew.

CHAPTER VI

SILENT SEATS

§ I. "SEPHARDIM" AND "ASHKENAZIM."

THE degradation of the Jew in the thirteenth century, when he was kicked down rapidly to the underworld, from which his only escape was to the other-world of his inner consciousness, is one of the saddest chapters in the history of Western civilization. No one, surveying the facts, can deem it a natural decline. From whatever angle we look at it, a comparative view will yield irrefragable evidence that the conditions were mainly artificial.

The difficulty is, where to begin. We want to establish the contrast between Jewish life in the light of learning and the same life in the darkness of lands where Jews were driven by legislation and its social consequences into the least exhilarating or edifying kinds of trade. If we may summarize in a paragraph the sociology and psychology of several centuries and countries, we would say that a spirit of adventure was common in that age to all peoples. But the means of satisfying it among the Christians were

turned, perforce of circumstances, to means of repelling it among the Jews. When we reach in the next chapter the life-work of Gershom, the "Light of the Exile" in the Rhineland, and Rashi (d. 1105), we shall see how those sages and their successors tried to stem the tide which was drawing, drawing Jews away from the soil and stranding them on the barren sands of commerce. Here we must be content to record the inevitableness of that process. We saw in an earlier section how the foundation of the feudal system in land tenure left no place for the Jews. The satisfaction of the adventurous spirit in the Crusades restricted further the opportunities of Jews. It became almost as difficult to own merchandise as to own land. The towns became as inhospitable as the countryside, and certain avenues even of trade and travel, hitherto filled by Jews, who had found therein some compensatory satisfaction for the common love of dangerous living, were reopened by the Crusades to Christian rivals. The Jew descended several steps of the commercial ladder. Since they could not move their goods with their domiciles, when one town after another became hostile, they converted the goods into money, and dealt solely in that commodity. Probably the proportion of money-lenders to the Jewish population at any given time or place is exaggerated by the legends of usury, but what is not

exaggerated is the compulsion of Jews to that calling, and the odium which they encountered for pursuing it. It was really a kind of vicious circle. Economic pressure forced the Jews to deal in money, and the canon law, which left them that resort, encouraged the social prejudice attaching to it.

A moment's reflection will show the effect of these conditions on Jewish life. We have seen how the Sephardic contribution—and *Sepharad* simply means Spain—was bound up, as by links in a chain, with the similar contributions to the common stock of civilization made by the Jews in the age of the *Geonim*, or heads of the Babylonian schools. We have seen, too, that these represented the line of scholars in Palestine, who had saved the treasures of spiritual Judaism from the wreck of political Jewry. Even after the lapse of the academies of Pumbeditha and Sura, the spirit of Saadiah, the great Gaon, survived by agency and communication, and the pursuit of learning was very little, if at all, disturbed by a sense of breach with the tradition of authority. Life, briefly, was not difficult for the Jews in their Spanish communities of that day: not sufficiently difficult, that is to say, to interrupt the continuity of intellectual freedom which was steadily pointing the way to the Renaissance and Reformation of the sixteenth century. But things were different beyond the Pyrenees. The Arabic language

ceased to facilitate intercourse, and this diminished ease was restricted further by such differences of environment as were created by Church and State, by the steeper ignorance of the Northern peoples, by the constant warfare between Christian and Moslem, and by the very fact of the responsibility of Spanish Jews in high offices to the counsels of their own country. The result was to deflect Jewish thought from the wider interests of scholarship to narrower measures for self-preservation. “These differences in language and in culture,” says a trustworthy Jewish writer,* “the need of crossing several national boundaries in order to arrive in Babylon, and the difficulty of receiving messengers from the seat of the Gaonate, led to the rise in France and Germany of a type of scholar distinctly different from that which developed in Spanish soil.” So, though scholarship flourished in the French and German communities, it was scholarship in another kind, looking to concentration rather than expansion, and to a conservative rather than a liberal rule in Judaism. These differences led, too—and this is even more significant—to an interruption or suspension of the progressive Spanish contribution, and to the transfer of the keeping of the Jewish future into the hands of what we may term without mispraisal the “safety-

* Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages*, New York, 1924; p. 99.

first " Jewish communities. It was the Ashkenazim (*Ashkenaz* was Germany), and not the Sephardim, who, by organizing their inner life, and constituting themselves into self-governing bodies, always competent to provide for the rapid changes in their relations with the owners of the land and the authorities in the towns, took the place of the decayed Gaonate, and became, by right of number as well as of purpose, the real seats of Jewish life in and after the thirteenth century. The " German " Jews, as Dr. Abrahams* has pointed out—and he justly regards it as a striking fact—" ended by gaining control of the whole of European Judaism "; so much so, indeed, that after the twelfth century, and when Innocent III. had imposed the badge, " even the Spanish Jews relied on their German brethren for guidance in the Talmud," though Maimonides had written his *Guide*. We shall follow in the next chapter the evolution of that control, with its consequent diversion of the road of progress. Here we would merely remark how much more comprehensible it is, under the conditions thus revealed, that anti-Maimonists in France caused the works of Maimonides to be publicly burnt almost in the lifetime of the Spanish master, and that Spinoza, a descendant of the Sephardim, was turned out of the congregation at Amsterdam. A long tract of jungle had to be traversed before

* *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, xxiii., xxvi.

Jews could enjoy their own inheritance and reap fruits from seeds of their own sowing. To those who, like Sir James Jeans, measure time by terms of astronomy, even to those who, like Sir Arthur Keith, measure it by the lower terms of anthropology, the centuries from Moses to Moses—from Moses Maimonides to Moses Mendelssohn—so long in the consciousness of Jews, stretched on the rack of the world's hate, will seem but a moment in eternity. To the student of human history, however, of man's capacity for suffering and waiting, for building and preparing, they are almost infinite in their content, and immense in their influence on what is worthy. We shall not be able to follow those years in much detail, but the general lines of the making of the Jewish problem in the countries beyond Spain must be made clear, in order that an estimate may be formed of the achievement of the Jews, who, by patience as by action, contributed to the solution of the problem. Meanwhile, and as introductory to this inquiry, we may seek in the life of one Spanish Jew a kind of bridge between Sepharad and Ashkenaz.

§ 2. A WANDERING SCHOLAR.

Inevitably an English historian, albeit writing of the Jews, thinks first of his own country. We have referred to Duke William's introduction of

Jews out of Normandy, when he invaded England in 1066, and to the roots which they struck in English soil during the ensuing two and a quarter centuries. These roots were not all eradicated by the Expulsion in 1290. Queen Elizabeth's tragic physician, Dr. Roderick Lopes, who was neither implicated in a plot to murder her nor used as the model for Shylock, though both allegations find support in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, was rather eminent than unique as a Jew in England in the sixteenth century. His Portuguese birth, much more than his Jewish origin, contributed to his fate in 1594, when he was executed, an old man, on Tyburn Hill; and his professional status and appointments indicate conclusively enough that Jews resided in England and practised trades and callings, despite the fact that the ban of Edward I. had not been lifted by any of his successors. There is evidence to this fact outside Dr. Lopes. Alvaro Mendes, his brother-in-law, for example, was a member of a Portuguese Order of Knighthood, and a diplomatist of eminent achievement. He is said on expert authority* to have "consistently

* Mr. Lucien Wolf, "Jews in Elizabethan England" (*Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, London, 1928; vol. xi., p. 29). I would also quote from *ibid.*, p. 2: "My purpose is to show that there were quite a goodly company of Jews in England throughout the reign of Elizabeth, and that they played a not unimportant part in the commerce and public affairs of those spacious days. They were almost all Portuguese Jews who were forcibly baptized

supported Elizabeth's policy of an Anglo-Turkish alliance against Spain, and although he did not succeed in actually concluding an armed alliance, he maintained cordial relations between England and Turkey, and thus defeated for many years all the Spanish schemes for securing the neutrality of the Sultan in the war between England and Spain. By his services in this latter respect he was instrumental in immobilizing in Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean large Spanish forces, which otherwise would have been turned against England." And there is evidence to the fact before Dr. Lopes. It is more than doubtful if the Expulsion was complete, and more than likely that many Jews escaped its shears. The maintenance of a Jewish *Domus Conversorum* lends probability to this presumption, and suggests that persons of Jewish origin have been native to England since the Norman Conquest. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Jews were represented in England by an unknown quantity of survivors from the Expulsion, most of whom either concealed their faith, or had already contracted out of it by intermarriage. They were represented, too, by occasional accretions from

by order of King Manuel in 1496, and the majority of them, as of most of the New Christians of that period, were Marranos, or secret Jews." Mr. Wolf was continuing the researches of the late Sir Sidney Lee, *Transactions New Shakespeare Society*, 1887-1892, part ii., pp. 143-66.

abroad. The new stock came chiefly from Spain and Portugal after 1492, either directly, or through the Low Countries, and brought with them seeds of the culture which had flourished in the Spanish golden age. Thus Jewish influence in England was never wholly discontinuous from the eleventh to the seventeenth century, when Cromwell encouraged the Jews to resume under more equitable conditions some of the functions which their ancestors had been invited to discharge. We are curious to learn what kind of Jews they were and what kind of influence they exercised. We wonder whether Shylock, like Fagin, was not rather a sop to vulgar prejudice than Shakespeare's type of a Jew, and whether the tenderer touches in his character (for even if he was insincere in Act I., Scene iii., 107-130, at least he was capable of tender thoughts before Jessica's surrender to temptation embittered him finally against the Christian) were not at least as close to tradition. The daughters of stage-Jews were always comely, so that there was some beauty for Christian eyes in Jewish homes, and we have noted before that Bacon's *New Atlantis* was almost contemporary with *The Merchant of Venice*, so that the tradition included Joabin as well as Shylock. Lessing's Nathan in the eighteenth century was not so revolutionary after all.

We would try to establish the continuity of that better tradition, and to affirm an association

of the Jewish idea, in educated if not in popular minds, with gentleness rather than cruelty, with learning rather than wildness, with piety rather than unfaith, with qualities increasing civilization rather than with those of the outlaw and the outcast. We cannot obliterate Shylock at the end of the sixteenth or Fagin in the middle of the nineteenth century, but we can weigh against them the figures of Joabin and Riah, the stage-Jews in the eighteenth century of Richard Cumberland and Lessing, and the real-life figures of Alvaro Mendes, Dr. Lopes, and Moses Mendelssohn. Even Jean Bodin (1530-1596), though not a Jew, was so distinctively a Hebraist as to be suspected of Jewish origin, and whether or not his mother was a Jewess is ultimately less significant than the fact that his great *République*, in its Latin translation, was used in Cambridge University, and that he himself had visited England some years before Bacon in 1624 expounded the laws and customs of the ideal republic through the mouth of a Jew. It is surely as important to discover how this tradition grew and flourished even in Elizabethan England, as to trace the progress of the anti-Jewish methods sharpened by Pope Innocent III. Those methods, backed by all the power of the Church of Rome in the thirteenth and following centuries, were bound to succeed: they were as irresistible as fate: they *were* fate, in the time of their occurrence.

But side by side with the Jew whom they fashioned out of ostracism, hate, and persecution, grew that other Jew, "a wise man, learned, and of great policy," as he is described in the *New Atlantis*, who somehow contrived to turn aside the weapons invented to destroy him; who, though Shylock to the world, was the father of comely daughters and studious sons, whom he trained in *Torah* and *Talmud*; who honoured his Sabbath as his bride, and his wife as the Sabbath; who drew from inexhaustible founts ready precepts of conduct for all experiences, even including the severe test of prosperity; and who, like his ancestors, the Pharisees, cherished a world-Jerusalem in place of the temporal Jerusalem which he had lost, and developed, out of his very sufferings, a Poor Law in favour of his own kin, and a code of charity, starting prescriptively with the stranger within his gates, which have served as a model for legislation and as an ethical ideal.*

Historians of pre-Expulsion Jewry have had little occasion to vary their inquiries into finance and religion, for the sake of asking more particularly what kind of people they were, who, from 1066 to 1290, screened the King in his exactions of revenue, and vexed the Church by their unbelief. Green's *History of the English People*, for example, which has not yet been superseded, relates how, at one end of these two centuries,

* See Note 9.

“ a new source of revenue ” was sought from the Jews ; how their presence, at least in the earlier years, was “ beneficial to the nation at large ” ; but how their influence gradually ceased to advance “ the general progress of civilization ” ; how the Royal protection, which had been “ dictated by no spirit of tolerance or mercy,” was withdrawn from the broken “ engine of finance ” ; and how, at the other end, the new sense of constitutional rights, which objected to special privileges (such as they were !) for the Jews, and an increased religious odium, conspired to bring about a Royal reversal of the Royal policy of 1066. “ At last,” writes Green, “ persecution could do no more, and Edward, eager at the moment to find supplies for his treasury, and himself swayed by the fanaticism of his subjects, bought the grant of a fifteenth from clergy and laity by consenting to drive the Jews from his realm.”

The record, though sparse, is adequate, and we need not pause to dispute about lights and shades. King William brought in Jews in 1066, King Edward drove them out in 1290. But between the two : the kind of life which they led, and how much purer it was than the repute of it, and the capacities which they repressed for their trade of supplying the Kings' revenues, and the religious front which they presented to fanaticism (for the religion which persecutes

always meets one which is persecuted), and the non-Norman castles which they built in air, and their cathedrals in dreamland; these records must be read between the lines of the historical narrative. They are not pertinent to a history of the English people, or, indeed, to the history of any people upon which the medieval Church had laid the stranglehold of its universal sway.* Yet Abraham ibn Ezra, visiting England in 1158, almost midway between 1066 and 1290, must have found company to his liking, and Jews of similar tastes to his own. True, he was a wanderer by instinct, but he came voluntarily to this country at a time when travel was very difficult, and was not undertaken merely for its own sake. A native of Toledo, where he was born in 1092, he went to the East about the same time as Jehudah Halevi. Later, he spent many years in Italy, where he wrote his commentary on the Bible. In 1155 he visited Provence, and three years afterwards, as we have seen, he was in London. His movements now become more doubtful, but he died in January, 1167, and there is good reason to believe that these last nine years were spent in England. If so, the Anglo-Jewish community must have been more attractive to scholars and more productive of learning than is commonly supposed from the outside records of its activities. Certainly, Ibn Ezra wrote here

* See Note 10.

a work on the foundation of religion, which includes a description of the state of Jewish studies in England at the time, and an imaginative vision comprised in "a letter on the Sabbath." He was at the front rank of the astrologers, who set the "natural law" of that age, and who, preceding the astronomers, were in the line of ascent to the Renaissance. Some of his works on mathematics and astrology were translated from Hebrew into French, in the country from which the English Jews had emigrated, and thence into Latin, English, and German. The name of Henri Bate (1244-1310), a Flemish pupil of Albertus Magnus, and author of a treatise on the astrolabe, is associated with these translations, which were partly made at his house in Malines by a French Jew, named Hayyim, about a hundred years after Ibn Ezra's death; and after another six centuries, in 1864, to be precise, an English poet re-translated those translations into the stanzas of "Rabbi Ben Ezra":

 "Thoughts hardly to be packed
 Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
 All I could never be,
 All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

 " So, take and use Thy work :
 Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the rim !
 My times be in Thy hand !
 Perfect the cup as planned !
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same !"

For Robert Browning, who recalls us to Abraham Ibn Ezra, approved of Jewish resistance in another poem :

“ By the torture, prolonged from age to age,
By the infamy, Israel's heritage,
By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's disgrace,
By the badge of shame, by the felon's place,
By the branding-tool, the bloody whip,
And the summons to Christian fellowship.”

“ The Jew lay deep in Browning,” writes a non-Jewish critic, and a Jewish critic* adds: “ He saw in Judaism certain elements of absolute truth; therefore he presented those elements through Jewish characters.” Our point is, that these “ elements of absolute truth,” which formed the material of medieval astrologers and alchemists, of a Henri Bate and a Michael Scot, and which passed from them into the heritage of our astronomers and chemists of today, were transmitted by liberal Jews—by Jewish freemen of learning—in the very epoch of their infamy and shame; and that even in England, which banned the Jews through the formative centuries from 1300 to 1650, the tradition of this contribution survived, and was caught by sensitive ears in the undernote below the Shylock-mockery, in Bacon's selection of Joabin, in Richard Cumberland's unpopular play, in Dickens's vision of the moving staircase, and in Browning's resurrection in the nineteenth

* Dr. I. Abrahams, quoting Stopford Brooke, in *By-paths in Hebraic Bookland*, Philadelphia, 1920 ; p. 275.

century of the wandering scholar who had settled in England in the twelfth. "All, men ignored in me," and, worse than ignored, repressed, with the psychologic consequences of repression, must be redeemed from ignorance, if the manufactured and superimposed "Jewish problem" is to be formulated in relation to Jewish life.

§ 3. THE MARRANOS.

We come at once to that "ignored" and "repressed" factor, when we consider the "secret" Jews, from whose ranks Queen Elizabeth did not disdain to seek counsellors and healers. Why "secret"? we ask. What was it that drove the proudest branch of the most ancient people in Europe—a people reaching back to an antiquity older than that of the Greeks, whose meanest teacher was honoured in the name of Hellenism—to conceal the Hebraism, or Judaism, from which he derived an equal title to honour? We remember a passage in Carlyle: "How silent now sits Royalism; sits all Aristocratism; Respectability that kept its Gig! The honour now, and the safety, is to Poverty, not to Wealth. . . . Aristocratism crouches low, in what shelter is still left; submitting to all requisitions, vexations; too happy to escape with life." It was the same with Judaism in Spain and Portugal. Too happy to escape with life, the Jews who had

consorted with royalty, who had been exalted to the aristocracy, who had kept their gig with respect, now crouched low in what shelter was left, seeking the safety of secrecy, and submitting, literally, to all requisitions. And, even so, they might not always escape with life. The annals of Jewish history are full of tales of tragic martyrdom, inflicted in Spain and Portugal on those low-crouched secret Jews. It lies outside the scope of this essay to dwell on the sufferings of the Jews. Our consistent purpose is fulfilled by exposing what they did, not what they bore, their contribution *to*, not *from*, the civilization, out of which their feet were always slipping, and to which they clung with such desperate tenacity. But we cannot measure that contribution except in relation to the difficulty of making it. It is by that standard alone that we can estimate the loss to civilization by the persecution of the Jews, in mind, body, and estate. If they had been destroyed, we might acquiesce in their fate. If they had been as content with obscurity as the Hellenes of today, we might leave them to their past. But the unbiased historian is not so easily dismissed. He marks the vegetation in the decay, the bright flowers springing among the weeds. He sees a Spinoza, a Bergson, an Einstein, defeating the centuries-long exclusion from professional rank and university training. He sees a Rothschild rising in integrity out of a pen of

ostracized money-lenders. And, more convincing even than personalities, though these confound all probable reasoning, he sees Judaism undefeated and indefeasible, re-establishing after eighteen hundred years the religious centre from which it was driven by Hadrian, and displaying in many departments of good endeavour the qualities that were ignored and repressed. Thus seeing, he is compelled to the rare exercise of an effort of imagination. He, too, like his cousin, the anthropologist, has to construct his *ex pede Herculem*. From the signs of Jewish achievement which he can see, he has to conjecture the parts which were lost. He has to rescue from the fires and to redeem from the cells of the Inquisition the "Royalism, Aristocratism, and Respectability," which were smothered in a common silence. Or, at best, he has to view these possibilities with charity. He cannot honestly refrain from asking why, despite the silence and the secrecy, the victory went to the Jews. The revolutionaries of Paris imposed their silence; the oppressors of the Jews failed.

We shall pass very briefly over the actual experience of the Jews in Portugal and Spain, where, after all, they had been settled for five centuries or more. Those who have the stomach for details may be referred to the fully documented *History of the Inquisition of Spain*, by Dr. H. C. Lea.*

* Four vols. New York and London, 1907.

Chapter i. of Book viii. of this work deals specifically with Jews, as to whom the author says: "Subjected, on the one hand, to the ceaseless espionage of servants and neighbours, and, on the other, to the pitiless zeal of the tribunals, even the heroic obstinacy of Judaism, which had triumphed over the countless miseries of the Dispersion, gradually succumbed to this all-pervading persecution, so ceaselessly and relentlessly applied." He cites "the passionless, businesslike reports, in which the incidents are recorded," and mercifully selects "one which omits the screams and cries of the victim that are usually set forth." It describes a case of moderate water-torture, administered in 1568 by the tribunal of Toledo to Elvira del Campo, who was accused of not eating pork and of putting on clean linen on Saturdays. These acts, which she admitted, seemed to indicate Judaizing. Elvira denied heretical intent, but, "after some preliminaries, she was told that it was determined to torture her, and in view of this peril she should tell the truth." Her difficulty under torture was to ascertain what "truth" she was to tell. The "moderate" torture completely exhausted her, without enlightening her as to the formula which the inquisitors regarded as "truth," and the narrative continues: "Four days were allowed to elapse, for experience showed that an interval, by stiffening the limbs, rendered repetition more

painful. She was again brought to the torture-chamber, but she broke down when stripped, and piteously begged to have her nakedness covered. The interrogatory went on, when her replies under torture were more rambling and incoherent than before, but her limit of endurance was reached, and the inquisitors finally had the satisfaction of eliciting a confession of Judaism." The confession was probably untrue. But we need not travel outside the comments of Dr. Lea himself on pages 26 and 234 of this volume. On the former page he remarks: "It is impossible to read these melancholy records without amazement that the incoherent and contradictory admissions through which the victim, in his increasing agonies, sought to devise some statement in satisfaction of the monotonous command to tell the truth, should have been regarded by statesmen and law-givers as possessed of intrinsic value. The result was a test of endurance, not of veracity." And Dr. Lea's further comment runs: "Besides the horrors of her trial, she was beggared and ruined for life, and an ineffaceable stain was cast upon her kindred and descendants. What became of the infant born in prison is not recorded, but presumably it was fortunate enough to die. Trivial as may seem the details of such a trial, they are not without importance as a sample of what was occupying the tribunals of all Spain, and they raise the interesting ques-

tion whether in truth the inquisitors believed what they assumed in the public sentence, that they had been labouring to rescue Elvira from the errors and darkness of her apostasy and to save her soul." And he notes the trivial evidence which was held to justify prosecution for Judaism, namely, a distaste for pork, and a woman's choice of Saturday for changing her chemise.

Ex uno disce omnes. But, lest our avoidance of malice be deemed to extenuate the facts, we may supplement Dr. Lea's evidence out of two Jewish authorities. Dubnow says:

"The expulsion of the Jews from the Pyrenean peninsula at the close of the fifteenth century did not break the bond which linked that hated people with the dark workshops of the Inquisition. True, the Jews had all quitted their inhospitable homeland, but there remained, now as then, the Marranos (literally, the damned or accursed), those thousands and tens of thousands of compulsory converts, whose hearts were still immovably true to their native faith and race. These unhappy men, who had hoped to alleviate their lot by a seeming baptism, found themselves condemned through all posterity to a veritable Inferno, in which they lived to deplore their separation from their brethren."

Mr. J. M. Myers says:

"The Inquisitors brought Marranos before them on the most flimsy evidence, and

hundreds might be arrested on the word of one accuser. It was said that there were thirty-four tracks by which the 'foxes' could be run to earth. Almost any sign of Judaizing was accepted. A new coat or clean shirt or fresh table linen on Saturday, a cold hearth or lighted candles on Friday evening, the eating of *Kosher* meat or food cooked with oil instead of lard, eating bitter herbs or unleavened bread on Passover, a dying man who followed the Jewish custom of turning his face to the wall, the slightest suspicion of Jewish practices was sufficient for the Inquisition to pounce upon the supposed heretic."

We may pass from generalities to particulars. We are told that Torquemada, in his fifteen years' activity, sent about ten thousand heretics to the stake and about a hundred thousand to lesser penalties. A letter is extant written by de Mello, the Inquisitor at Lisbon, to the King of Portugal, in the following gleeful terms: "About a hundred convicts marched in ceremonial procession, led by the secular authorities, accompanied by the clergy of two churches. As the procession reached the place of justice, the hymn was intoned, 'Veni, Creator spiritus.' One of the monks ascended the platform, but his allocution was brief, since the programme was long. The sentences were recited . . . those of death at the end. There were twenty of these. Seven women and twelve men were bound to the stakes and

burnt alive. Only one woman was pardoned, owing to her final retraction." A contemporary Jewish writer narrates: "In these days the smoke of the martyr-pyre rises unceasingly to heaven in all the Spanish Kingdoms and the Isles. One-third of the Marranos have perished in the flames, another third wander homeless over the earth seeking where they may hide themselves, and the remainder live in perpetual terror of the Question." Of what went before, a Christian bishop wrote: "I have seen many dragged to the font by the hair, and the fathers, clad in black, with bowed heads, accompanying their children to the altar, to protest against these inhuman baptisms. I have seen still more horrible and undescrivable violence done them."

Omitting the horrors and the violence, which are not relevant to our argument, we may pass from numbers to individuals. We select two only out of the multitude. On May 5, 1624, Antonio Homen was burnt alive at Lisbon, at the instance of the Inquisition, though he was a dean of the Church who had occupied the chair of Canon Law at Coimbra University, and was now sixty years of age. His crime was the suspicion of Marranism (secret Judaism), due to his Jewish descent, and his final martyrdom occurred after five years' harsh incarceration. On December 15, 1647, Isaac de Castro Tartas, a Jewish scholar, only twenty-four years old, was burnt alive at

Lisbon. He had emigrated to Brazil, and was captured in Bahia, whence the hounds of the Inquisition harried him back to be sentenced in Portugal. He was a man distinguished for his learning, and he died with the Hebrew confession of monotheism (the *Shema*') on his tortured lips. The story produced an indelible impression upon contemporaries and even on posterity.

We shall summon no more witnesses, for our immediate object is achieved. We have reached here by anticipation the middle of the seventeenth century, and we are face to face with a tremendous contrast: Portugal in 1647, and England in 1655; Isaac de Castro Tartas and Manasseh ben Israel; despair and hope; death and life. While the fires were burning in Portugal, and the stench of human flesh rose to heaven, to be rejected, haply, by the Deity in whose name the sacrifice was offered, Oliver Cromwell was giving favourable consideration to the plea of men of the same religion and place of origin for right of readmission, after an official ban which had lasted as many years as there are days in a year. The Marranos should be "secret" no more. Respectability was to set up its gig again. Royalism and Aristocratism (of faith and intellect) were to be restored to self-expression, after a Terror worse than the French. We shall come back in the next chapter to the inquiry from which we have turned aside, into the means adopted by the

Jews in Ashkenaz to avert the fate of their brethren of Sepharad : into the loss and gain to Judaism, that is to say—to Judaism outside the Peninsula—of what we may call the great refusal ; of the preference of darkness to light, of the open secrecy of the ghetto to the furtive secrecy of a false assimilation, of traditional Judaism to New Christianity, of the Jews' badge to the Marranos' curse, of safety to adventure, of retirement to participation. Meanwhile, this striking contrast in the mid-seventeenth century between the *autos-da-fé* in Portugal and the *Vindiciæ Judæorum** in Holland, impels us to one or two reflections. Consider, first, the almost intolerable plight of men of honour and conviction, reduced by actual, present fear—based on vicarious, if not personal, experience of anguish to life and limb—to deny, conceal and disguise a possession more precious than wealth, which they held too dear to abandon. Extend the consideration of this plight over a term of more than a hundred years ; multiply it by the Jewish population of two countries of peaceful settlement through five centuries ; intensify it by the excruciating conflict of parental affection with spiritual pride ; and then imagine the consequences to character of the long-drawn, agonizing ordeal. The swifter night of the ghetto may have been

* *The Defence of the Jews*, the title of Manasseh ben Israel's pamphlet, prepared in view of his visit from Amsterdam to London.

preferable to so fitful and precarious a light. Consider, next, the fabricators of that ordeal, and try to assess the rationality of a Church, which, in the age of Milton and Galileo, of Grotius and Cromwell, could consent to and promote such a policy. It is almost inconceivable that the Church, in its highest representatives, really believed, in that enlightened century, which had travelled a long way out of medievalism, that its God would willingly and gratefully accept the abomination of the *autos-da-fé*. We question the *bona fides* of the Pope—not necessarily of his more ignorant clergy, or of the butchers in their cells : but we question the *fé* behind the *autos*. For the sake of the sanity of Rome, we are bound to throw doubt on her sincerity. We may suggest, in defence of a great creed, that baser motives were likewise at work, albeit not consciously in the minds of the authors of the Inquisition. Centuries before, in the era of the Black Death, a non-Jewish historian admitted that the blood-lust against the Jews was likewise partly a treasure-hunt. The social revolution of that epoch, when the guilds were fighting the nobles, embittered popular hate of the Jews, from whom the nobles exacted loans ; and the history of anti-Judaism, which the Inquisition wrote in “acts of faith,” was stained by more sordid acts of spoliation, confiscation, and remission of debts. If the *autos-da-fé* had been content to be faithful, and

had not filled the pockets of their agents with the money of their victims, if religious fanaticism had not marched with a greed of material possessions, we might more readily condone the Spanish and Portuguese part in this record of Jewish experience in the seventeenth century. We note, too, relevantly to these considerations, that the Church, which burnt the New Christians, was not more tolerant of the New Learning, to the advancement of which the Jews, secreted in the Marranos, had made such effective contribution. We have remarked how Milton, in 1638, visited Galileo, "a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in Astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought"; and we recall the facts that modern astronomy was indebted to Jewish and Arabic science, and that Milton was secretary to Cromwell, to whom Manasseh ben Israel addressed himself. We need not prolong these considerations. They supply hints of other than purely spiritual motives for the sufferings inflicted on the Marranos, and we are aware that a surrender of the spirit would, theoretically,* have spared them their woe.

* The practical value of such a surrender is not easy now to estimate. The suggestion in the text is that, as between the Marranos and the Inquisition, the spiritual balance inclines to the former.

§ 4. URIEL DA COSTA.

We have still one peak to climb before we enter the valley of Ashkenaz, and the paths set by Gershom and Rashi. From the vantage-ground in the mid-seventeenth century, and from another event at that date, we shall better be able to survey the long road, parallel to the Sephardic, which the Ashkenazim followed to the same bourne.

The life of Uriel da Costa, who was fifty-five years of age when he shot himself in Amsterdam in 1640, is both more and less than a human document—*exemplar humanæ vitæ*, as he bombastically called it in his autobiography. It is a miniature *Divina Commedia*, a mortal tragedy followed by the silvery laughter of Meredith's "Spirit overhead." By a shaft of irony, this revert from Marranism was killed through an Inquisition by fellow-Jews. He had concealed his Judaism, but he could not conceal his anti-Judaism, and his fate, not very pitiable in itself, nor really very significant, illuminates the illogic of a hundred years of false-seeming and pretence. As the wandering scholar, Abraham ibn Ezra, visiting England in the twelfth century, sought a way from Sepharad to Ashkenaz, so Uriel da Costa, in the seventeenth century, stood alone on a deserted and broken bridge, incapable of the wisdom of the Greeks or of the learning of the Hebrews. A greater than he, Spinoza, was to

win the homage of the Synagogue which expelled him, but even in the light reflected from this near contemporary da Costa's figure is that of a rebel on a lower plane. True, he inspired a play by Karl Gutzkow, the "young German" of the rebellion of 1848, in which he is elevated to proclaim himself self-contained in his own world ("Mir selber bin ich eine ganze Welt"). But he was not equal to Gutzkow's staging of him, and he passes from the Jewish stage in Amsterdam, without credit to himself, or to the Synagogue, or to the circumstances which made and broke him.

Gabriel da Costa, to give him his baptismal name, was a typical son of the assimilate Marranos, who flourished in Portugal in the sixteenth century. His family had eminent connections. Ricardo, Henriques, Aguilar, are among the names on the family tree, which produced, among other members, Emanuel Mendes da Costa (1717-91), F.R.S. and Librarian to the Society, Isaac da Costa (1798-1860), the Dutch poet, Solomon da Costa, a benefactor of the British Museum, and Sir Michael Costa, the Italian operatic composer, who was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1869. Gabriel was born at Oporto about 1585, and studied philosophy and law at the University of Coimbra. His father died, and he supported his mother and a family of four brothers and a sister as treasurer and canon of a church in his native city. But he was not happy in his beliefs,

finding particular reluctance to accept the doctrine of eternal punishment. Before he was thirty years of age, he contrived to slip the barriers, and to migrate to Amsterdam, where all six of them openly adopted Judaism, and Gabriel signalized his reversion by changing his name to Uriel.

We now have to deal with Uriel the Jew. He has been educated, we remember, by the Jesuits, and has held ecclesiastical office in the Church of Rome. He has sought, at considerable sacrifice of material comfort and security to himself and his nearest kin, release from oppressive dogmas which he found in conflict with his reason. He has wanted intensely to be free to exercise his reason; to believe by conviction, not by authority, and to apply to his beliefs the touchstone of the principles which he had learnt in his legal and philosophic studies. An acute disillusion is inevitable. He brings a Jesuit-trained intellect to bear on a Talmud-trained creed. He brings the reform of a rationalist, instead of the zeal of a convert, to traditions, the guardians of which watch jealously the conformity of a redeemed Marrano. He is as indifferent to the Jewish past, which had built a fence round the *Torah*, in order to conserve and consecrate its obligations, as to the Jewish present in Amsterdam, where, as Spinoza was to discover, the community depended for its safety on keeping quiet. The result must be disaster. There could be no satisfactory *via*

media between a de-Christianized Jew of this type and his careful, formal, co-religionists in Amsterdam. He was inviting their displeasure, and the undesired curiosity of Christian neighbours. And Uriel, lacking in *finesse*, was lacking also in the spirit which makes a martyr. He was more concerned to be reasonable than to be right. He was a better casuist than witness. He would argue it all out. He went to Hamburg in 1616 and disputed about traditions with Leon Modena, the head of the Rabbis in Venice. He was essentially a Karaite. He used epithets derived from Christian controversy in his disputations with his own brethren, talking despitefully about Pharisaism, and ignoring or overlooking its great work. He alienated good friends—among them, an Amsterdam physician, Samuel da Silva, who was able to anticipate a book by da Costa with a book of his own on the immortality of the soul “against a certain *Contrariador*” (they wrote in Portuguese). The indefinite was soon to be defined. Against Uriel da Costa, in his person, in his family, in his opinions, when he walked abroad, when he stayed at home, when he ate, when he spoke, when he thought, an impenetrable wall was raised up. He was excommunicated and he was banned. The reason of the tireless rationalist was starved, for none would exchange words with him. A man living by intercourse, he was left unutterably alone. He

tried all shifts. The unwilling Christian had been a secret Jew. The unwilling Jew would be a secret Deist. But he was unequal to the burden of his own conscience. He could neither keep his secret nor reveal it. For six years he bore an ordeal, to imagine which we must shut ourselves away in the narrow streets of Amsterdam three hundred years ago, under the immediate eyes of hostile neighbours, injured grossly in their most sensitive contacts. It was a cruel age and an impossible situation, and the experience broke his resistance.

So we reach the last scene in the tragi-comedy, or, rather, the last but one. It was enacted in the Synagogue in Amsterdam, in the year 1639, and his own account of it relates that the place dedicated to worship was crowded with eager spectators. Indeed, though he does not say so, the spectacle recalled in its setting a Catholic *auto-da-fé* in the land of origin of the Dutch Jews who ordained it. They should have learned to avoid what they chose to imitate. Uriel had to ascend the rostrum, and recite aloud the long confession prepared for him by the Rabbis. Then, stripping himself to the waist, he had to suffer the indignity of being tied to a pillar, where he received the statutory penalty of thirty-nine stripes. The ban was removed, and he resumed his clothing. But the show was not done. He had still to stretch himself on the threshold of the

Synagogue, while the mob trampled out across his body. . . . In the last scene of all he is once more alone. He has written his *Exemplar humanæ vitæ*, enouncing that "all evils come from not following Right Reason and the Law of Nature," and he is free at last to follow their lead. God and men have turned away from him, though he wanted so little from either—just the barest commonplaces of the twentieth century. He shot himself in April, 1640.

We have told this story in order to write *finis* to the golden age of the Jews in Spain. "How silent now sits Royalism; sits all Aristocratism; Respectability that kept its Gig! The honour now, and the safety, is to Poverty, not to Wealth." In the beginning, Hasdai ibn Shaprut, whose lines fell unto him in pleasant places in Cordova, and who inherited, not without misgivings, the liberal tradition of Philo and Saadiah; the Greek wisdom of ibn Gabirol (Avicebron); the lyric heart of Jehudah Halevi; the rationalism of Moses Maimonides; ibn Ezra, seeking his poorer brethren in the darkness outside Spain; the hundred years' travail of the Marranos, averting one curse by encountering another, and falling from the gig into the tumbril, more frequently and more heavily towards the close; and, in the end, the jealous honour and rigid safety of the refugees in Amsterdam, and the fate of the last heir of the golden age, who sought to break the

silence which was prudent. It illustrates, too, the urgency of the problem which was courageously faced by the Jews of the Ashkenazic communities. They could not be Marranos. Their circumstances were different from those in Spain, and the solution by secrecy was not offered to them. They had to be open Jews, and their openness drove them into ghettos; and, herded in ghettos, and wearing badges, they had to save Judaism from utter ruin. How they did it we shall see in the next chapter; but, plainly, it could not be done along the road followed by the Marranos. *These* disguised their Judaism for worldly objects—for bare life first, but, later, for life's trimmings; for a place in the sun, and the exercise of talents, and making money, and winning esteem. *Those* disguised secular ambition for Judaism, concentrating at first all their efforts on filling a brimming Jewish life, and on supplying out of native elements the joy denied them externally. The "safety" was only comparative: there were terrible massacres and persecution, though the Ashkenazim did not live, like the Marranos, on the edge of a secret of which they were always suspect. But the "poverty" was real. It was the accepted concomitant of Jewish life. It was dangerous to grow rich like Süß Oppenheimer,* and difficult

* 1698-1738. Cf. L. Feuchtwanger's romance, *Jew Süß*, Munich, 1925; London, 1926.

to grow rich like the Rothschilds, and the danger appealed to the sense of adventure, and the difficulty steeled the moral sense.

Finally, the fate of da Costa illustrates something bigger than the history of the Jews. We hear in the last shot of the Sephardim, in that lonely study in Amsterdam, the first shot of the battle of emancipation which was to level the ghettos in Ashkenaz. Yet another hundred years, or a little more, and Moses Mendelssohn was to sit for Nathan der Weise and to renew the foundations of modern knowledge. So hearing, we catch a sound of that vaster struggle of humanity, not pursuing "a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed," but going out to seek her adversary in the race, "where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." Da Costa, fitfully, perhaps, and with drawbacks of character and environment, belongs to the heroic company of self-expressive victims of a social order, in which they can neither be tolerant nor tolerated.

"Rousseau leidet, Rousseau fällt durch Christen,
Rousseau—der aus Christen Menschen wirbt."

So wrote Schiller of a greater than da Costa, and the praise, high though it is, might be altered and adapted to suit the service to the Jews, and the suffering by them, of the smaller man.

CHAPTER VII

THE VALLEY OF ASHKENAZ

§ 1. THE LIGHT OF THE VALLEY.

THERE are a few threads to be picked up before we descend into the valley. Ashkenaz was fed by Sepharad, in the sense that the Western communities of Jews were reinforced, and, in the end, partially dominated, by immigrants from Spain and Portugal. It was a movement similar to that which occurred in the period of the Crusades, when streams of Jews from Germany and Bohemia trekked into the neighbouring territories of Poland, and founded a centre of Jewish life, in some respects comparable to that of Spain. By the middle of the seventeenth century, these numbered about half a million people, maintaining self-governing institutions and reaching a high level of special culture. It was subsequently to that epoch that frequent ordeals of terror obscured the tradition of many centuries, and the partitions of Poland in the eighteenth century and the policy of Russian rulers in the nineteenth and twentieth turned the terror into an endemic experience. In this aspect of long-drawn agony, the Polish

history of the Jews is more sombre than the Spanish ; their golden age before the persecutions was less in touch with civilization outside. It is precisely this closer contact of Spanish Jews with the life and interests of their fellow-countrymen which increases the tragedy of their lot, with its miserable conclusion at last in the choice between a martyr's death at once, a martyr's death deferred by conversion, and the hardly minor martyrdom of expulsion. In countless instances no choice was offered, and our concentration in the last chapter on the fate and history of the Marranos, or secret Jews, who were at the same time the new Christians, and whose significance to our purpose is derived from their constant participation in public affairs, has tended to overlook the vast numbers of silent victims of fanaticism, many of whom perished for their faith, and many of whom went into exile for it.

For those who died no records are available. Perhaps, when their cries were stilled, theirs was still the happier lot, though the extraordinary thing about the Jews—and the ensuing pages may help to explain it—is their comparative indifference to unhappiness, their refusal of it, and their resilience from it. The fate of the Jews who were *not* killed in Spain, Germany, France and other countries, and even yesterday in the Ukraine, might seem to be harsher in suffering, for themselves and their descendants, than that

of those who suffered once and no more. But the Jew's psychology is exceptional: he was always joyfully returning thanks for his preservation to endure fresh suffering. He was a sentinel who could not desert his post, because he carried it with him when he was driven from it, or because, like the secret Jews of Spain, he camouflaged it against hostile eyes; and he found a constant source of happiness in continuing to bear witness to his faith. Take any incident at random as typical of the rest. We select one of 1389 in the ancient capital of Prague. It was Easter Sunday for the Christians and the last day of Passover for the Jews. A solemn procession of the Host took its way through the Jewish quarter. A group of children, released from Synagogue, were playing with sand in the gutter, and some flying grains settled on the priestly robe. Instantly the "outrage" was avenged. The mob enforced its violent rule of "death or baptism!" and it is narrated that three thousand Jews were killed outright in that narrow space, and that many preferred to slay themselves. The Synagogue was burnt down; the Scrolls of the Law were torn to pieces, and even the corpses in the graveyard were scattered above their rifled tombstones. The King of Bohemia, be it added, confiscated the property of the murdered Jews, and, after imprisoning many others, graciously pardoned them on payment of

heavy fines. It is outside our purpose to multiply instances of this kind. Volumes could be, and have been, filled with them. Those who survived such experiences, in every city and in every year through many countries and centuries, lived to endure a worse fate than the faithful, silent dead. It is for the sake of the survivors that we stir the silence of the dead, in this single instance out of so many. The survivors of the blood-baths in Spain had either to flee or to remain behind. Those who remained lived the double life, which might bring them at last to a martyr's death, or to the unendurable dubieties of an Acosta. We are concerned now with those who fled. It is a toilsome odyssey of wandering. Some crossed the Straits to North Africa ; many trekked to Turkey in Europe and Asia, where they founded powerful congregations, which were kept in touch with their brethren in Western countries by the newly forged chain of printed books. These distributed the consolations of religion, chiefly in the form of mystical lore, which encouraged the hope of a sudden redemption. Thus it was at Smyrna, in Turkey, that Sabbatai Zevi was born in 1626, and it was to the faith of Mahomet that he reconciled himself before his death in 1676, having spent some of his fifty years in a brief and brilliant impersonation of the Messiah of the Jews. The times were ripe for this " madness among the Jews," as an old chronicler termed

it, since the common, crushing sense of exile had become almost intolerable in its contrast with the common, exalting belief in a Divine restoration to the Holy Land.

This was the dream, truer than reality, which united those composite communities of Jewish fugitives from many lands, and which made living, however precarious, better than dying for Judaism. Driven from Spain, France, Portugal, England, and from certain cities in Italy; herded in other cities, such as Venice, in walled ghettos behind barred gates; compelled to wear a distinctive badge and to pursue distinctive callings, which destroyed their self-respect and their respect among men, the Jews of Germany and Poland, to whose records we now come, sought to repair the broken dream of Jewish safety, and to invent the brightness of a dream to reillumine the darkness of real experience. They would extinguish the darkness in dream-shine. The light of Maimonides was false: he had lit his torch from the candles of the Greeks. The light of the Marranos was false: their curse could never be turned to a blessing. Assimilation was delusion, whether external or intellectual; difference was the mark of all the tribe. Since they might not live in the world, let the world go: they would live in the Word; and the Cabala, which worried the Word, and even the letters, of the *Torah*, into endless mystical meanings,

became a new source of the old, fond dream-light. To these signs and wonders we shall return. Here we mention them, however, in order to accustom our eyes to the light which shone in the valley. The ghettos were never homes of gloom. They shut out the world with its gloom. The shut-in Jews shut out what was non-Jewish. The pan-Jewish life of the ghetto enjoyed streams of radiance, spontaneously ignited. So the Gentile policy of hate and exclusion finally defeated its own object. It engendered in the segregated Jew a visibility in darkness and a cheerfulness in sorrow. The perception of Job xiii. 15* became very real to the Jew, and his "trust" was interpreted as a very present confidence that things were not as they seemed. It was all dream and illusion, perhaps, but it quickened the spiritual faith of a conscious race which defied material engines of destruction.

§ 2. THE CABALA.

The significance of the Cabala to the purpose of this history is derived from its influence in Europe at the time of the Reformation. We may cite at the outset of our inquiry a non-Jewish witness to this fact. "The Jewish Cabala," writes Canon Box,† "exercised—especially

* "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

† *The Legacy of Israel*, 328.

through Reuchlin—a considerable influence in the Christian world. It helped to leaven the religious movements identified with the Reformation, and the cabalistic literature was diligently studied by Christian scholars during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.” Thus Bishop Fisher and Dean Colet in our own country were acquainted with Reuchlin’s treatise *De Arte Cabalistica*, and Colet’s cautious judgment is extant in a letter to Erasmus: “I dare not express an opinion on this book. I am conscious of my own ignorance, and how blind I am in matters so mysterious, and in the works of so great a man. However, in reading it, the chief miracles seemed to me more in the words than the things; for, according to him, Hebrew words seem to have no end of mystery in their characters and combinations.”

Colet was as shrewd as he was cautious. The “no end of mystery” which he discovered in the characters and combinations of Hebrew words, and even, as he might have added, of their letters, takes us back to what we said just now of the substitution of the Word for the world. The “no end” was the Hebrew *En Soph*, which means, literally, *sine fine*, or Infinite, and which was a name for the Deity: and out of the impalpable *En Soph* streamed the ten tangible “emanations,” which are axiomatic in cabalistic lore. The Hebrew name for “emanation” is *Sephira* (plural

Sephiroth), and it is to be noted that *Sephira* is probably connected with the Aristotelian term *sphere*.

We must not lose ourselves in this doctrine of "emanations." It belongs to the shadowland of thought, known as neo-Platonic, in which humble, finite, created things are related symbolically to the Infinite, or *En Soph*. It trails its cosmogony on the skirts of numbers unco-ordinated by mathematics. Its theology forgets the *logos* and is relaxed into theosophy, and its soaring philosophy is jerked back to earth by a kind of mystical philology, in which letters, constituting words, are pursued for the thoughts which the words express.

How the Jews obtained their Cabala, and what the Cabala meant to them, belong to the separate history of the Jews, and are a part of their constant search for the Messiah. Thus, the influence of the Cabala on Judaism lies a little apart from its influence on Christianity. There was a Jewish Cabalist towards the close of the thirteenth century who sought to convert a Pope to his doctrine, in the hope of expediting the restoration, and, though his ambition was extreme, it shows what magic resided in the mystery of numbers and how the efforts of the mystics were devoted, in the special circumstances of Jewish life at that epoch, to the establishment of a date for Israel's redemption from exile (*Galuth*). Since no aid

was afforded by man, nor could be looked for in space or time, a relation, spatial and temporal, had to be proved to emanate from the *En Soph*. The alternative was spiritual perdition, corresponding to the material lot of the Jews, and they defeated that fate by expanding *Torah* and Talmud into the revelation of the Cabala. They articulated Unrelated Being, relating it, numerically, alphabetically, symbolically, with visible and tangible created things; and the most convincing proof of inspiration which they could offer to the Jewish masses, who were tending their light in darkness, was, obviously, a Messiah—the constant object of Jewish hopes and the styptic of all Jewish fealty. If any fiction of calculation could establish a date for his advent, and if any combination of Unknowns to a seizable quantity could be resolved into his name and attributes, then Cabalism would have completed Judaism; and so a string of false Messiahs mocked the faithful credulousness and unsatisfied longing of the Jews.

We shall come back in a later section to these aspects; they may be found to be connected with the Zionist movement of the present day. Here, however, we are immediately concerned with the influence of the Cabala on the mind of Europe, which, except for this contribution from the ghettos, would have been lacking in certain notable features. We shall not lay special stress

on the debt of Dante, on the one part, or of the Spanish mystics on the other. The evidence is highly technical and is still under collection, but it already indicates (1) that many esoteric images in the *Divina Commedia* may have been drawn from Islamic sources, and are to be found, anterior to such writers, some of whom flourished in Spain, in the literature of the Talmud and Cabala; and (2) that Hispano-Jewish religious writers, as was indicated in our discussion of Ponce de Leon, conveyed to such poets as Sta. Teresa (1515-1582) at least a part of the lore which they derived from their own *Hechaloth*, a Hebrew book of "Halls," or "Palaces," composed in Babylonia during the Gaonic era, and founded ultimately on the visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah. These debts have still to be exactly computed. Meanwhile, it is pertinent to observe that the Babylonian origin of Jewish mysticism, and, ultimately, of the mysticism of Western poesy, is to be traced not only, or even chiefly, in Spain, but likewise in Germany. Ashkenaz and Sepharad alike were the heirs of one tradition; and, while ibn Gabirol, or Avicbron, infiltrated his native lore with the neo-Platonism which flourished in Moslem Spain, the German Cabala was purer in descent. Its canonical book was the *Zohar* ("Brightness"), which took shape and had its vogue in the thirteenth century; and, omitting here the nearer references which that work will require, we pass

at once, in our review of the mind of Europe, as affected by the Jewish Cabala, to the eve of the German Reformation. Remembering, first, that the Reformation was the Italian Renaissance under a northern sky, and that German students out of Italy, bringing their harvest home, extended to the Hebrew and Greek Testaments the methods which Florentine Platonists had applied to the text of their Master, we may revisit their academy for a moment. There is the memory, for instance, of an old Byzantine Greek who was delegated to the Council of Florence in 1439 as a champion of the Greek Church. Though already eighty-three years of age, instead of attending the Council, we read, "he poured forth his Platonic lore, and uttered dark sentences to a circle of eager Florentines."* "Hanging upon his lips," we read again,† of that circle of eager Florentines, "they called him Socrates and Plato in their ecstasy"; and while the Platonic academy was founded by Cosimo de' Medici as a direct result of this old Greek's infectious zeal, he indulged the ecstasy of his audiences, as was noted above in another context, by adopting the name of Pletho, for the sake of its likeness to Plato, as the equivalent of his native name, Gemistos. "Dark sentences" of "Platonic lore" are precisely the epithets of the ore dug out from the

* Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, iv., 41.

† Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, ii., 149.

Cabala and its *Zohar*, and the testimony, vouched for by many witnesses, to the fascination exercised by Pletho on the minds of the makers of the Renaissance explains the wild-fire spread of the study of Jewish books. They combined neo-Platonic elements with Biblical mysticism, and went to the heads of eager students in Florence and beyond. Pletho, the teacher, who died in 1450, was always a Hellenist; but Pico della Mirandola, the pupil, who died in Florence in 1494, at the early age of thirty-one, added Hebraism to Hellenism. He believed that he had discovered in the Cabala confirmation of Christian dogma: "There is no science," he declared, "that can more firmly convince us of the divinity of Christ than magic and the Cabala." He set the example of Hebrew study to the men who went before the Reformation, and we hear now of such Hebrew tutors as Elias Delmedigo, Jochanan Alemanno, Jacob Loans, Obadiah Sforzo, and others, who reinforced their learned Greek *confrères* in opening the gateway of antiquity. The classical renaissance of Italy was stretched in Germany to the Hebrew classics, and Luther's guide and precursor, Johann Reuchlin, was directed to the Cabala by Pico.

Reuchlin's cabalistic treatise, *De Verbo mirifico*, which opened the esoteric lore of Hebraism, appeared in 1494, the year of Pico's death. As it went back directly to the *Zohar*, and, through

the *Zohar*, to Talmud and *Torah*, so it went forward, through his Hebrew grammar (1506), to Luther's translation of the Old Testament, and the whole course of the Reformation to this day. His *De Arte cabalistica* was published in 1517, and had a preface addressed to Pope Leo X., not the first of the Popes, as we have seen, to be introduced to Cabalism. He was professor of Greek and Hebrew at Ingolstadt, where he lectured on the Hebrew grammar of David Kimhi (thirteenth century), a distinguished member of a family of Jewish scholars, whose influence was still potent after four centuries on the compilers of the Authorized Version of the Bible (1611). It is not easy to exaggerate—but the tendency has been all the other way—the contribution of the Jews to the scholarship which expanded the Renaissance into the Reformation. A bare list of scholars is impressive; for, even allowing for the impetus to Hebrew studies given by Biblical commentary and translation, we have to recognize in that age a wider and less specialized Hebraism. The Humanists had been Hellenists; they now aspired to be Hebraists as well—not in order to achieve this or that task, but because a knowledge of Hebrew was essential to *litteræ humaniores* and ranked as a part of a scholar's education. The collectors of manuscripts, who were the bibliophils of their time, and of whom Petrarch had been the first, were eager to add

Hebrew treasures to their libraries. Johannes Trithemius, for example, of Trittenheim, on the Moselle, owned a valuable collection of this kind, which was visited by Reuchlin in 1496 ; and there were other patrons of learning in the same class. Thus Hebraism enjoyed a popularity which, though it was not shared by all Jews, still softened in places the rigour of the treatment of individuals. There was no Gemistos Pletho of Hebraism, placing on an Academy in the North the spell of his "dark sentences," and compelling for his race the respect of scholars emulous of its culture. But a distant analogue may be found in the record of Elias Levita (c. 1470-1549), a German Jew resident in Italy, where he taught Hebrew in Venice and Rome. For thirteen years prior to 1528, when Rome was sacked by the Emperor Charles V., Levita lived a peaceful and tranquil life in the palace of Cardinal Egidio de Viterbo. There he wrote a masterly Hebrew grammar, and won the approval of Pope Leo X. for the foundation of a Hebrew printing-press. Later, in retreat at Venice, he published his famous work *Masoreth ha-Masoreth*, in which he proved that the vowel-points in the Hebrew Testament were invented by Masoretic scholars after the era of the Talmud, and that the accepted text was therefore comparatively late. But the textual criticism of the Bible was then, as always, a cause for acute controversy, and Levita did not escape attack.

At the same time he aroused interest in a question of scholarship and interpretation which was debated for many years. His treatise was translated into Latin by Sebastian Münster (1489-1552), a notable Christian Hebraist, and Levita's acquaintance with the French Ambassador in Venice brought him an invitation from the King of France to occupy a Chair of Hebrew at Paris University. He declined this appointment on grounds honourable to his concern for Jewish interests, and his name stands as one of the chief links—one only among many—in the chain of learned Jews, who, despite the disrepute of Shylock in the Venice of the same day, placed the founders of the Reformation, as critics, translators, and exegetes, under a permanent debt to the Jewish scholars of their times, and, backwards through those scholars, to the accumulated learning which they had inherited from their forebears in the thirteenth century, from the schools in Babylon behind them, and ultimately from Philo in Alexandria and his teachers in Judæa.

To these origins we have still to come back. Here we are anxious to emphasize the extent of a half-forgotten debt. As we saw in a previous section, Shylock is better known than Joabin; the usurer of the sixteenth century is a more familiar Jewish type than the utopian. Similarly, the money-lender, again, is deemed more typi-

cally Jewish than the book-lender; than men like Loans and Sforzo, who were actual teachers of the Hebrew language; men like Levita and Jacob ben Hayyim (*c.* 1470-1538), who worked devotedly on Hebrew texts; men like Daniel Bomberg, the printer, Johann Reuchlin, Münster, and Cardinal Egidio, who acquired from Judaism and transmitted to Christianity elements essential to its civilizing energy. Yet these powers and faculties were truly Jewish. It was these, and not the characteristics acquired by manumitted slaves seeking a means of livelihood far away from their own soil, or the shifts practised by unemployed and unemployable, restricted, in the scope of their activities, to an ever narrower and more precarious ledge of trade, which were native to the Jews, and—what is more significant—which were consistently cultivated by them. Take, for instance—one example out of very many—the text of the decrees of the Rabbis of the Rhine communities in the thirteenth century.* From the major and minor ordinances in this document we may quote the following paragraphs:

“We have also agreed and ordered that each man shall pay his tithes or other gifts to charity, in accordance with the decree of the community.

“In a locality where the amount given for the instruction of the young is insufficient,

* See Note II.

they may take part of what people have left for 'the memory of their souls,' and give it to the teachers, unless the person on the sick-bed stated the purpose for which his money was to be used.

"Every man shall set aside a definite time for study. If he is unable to study Talmud, he shall read Scripture, the weekly portion, or the Midrash, according to his ability. He who does much and he who does little are alike, provided that he is not prevented by an emergency.

"Every man shall cast aside enmity and rivalry."

Surely here we see in the making men of charity and learning, not of usury and greed. We see them furnished with a poor law of their own, a code of education, a Burnham scale for teachers, and even a fund to raid for its supply. They regulate the hours of Talmudic labour, by a kind of nationalization of their staple industry, which they thoroughly safeguard and protect, and they lay down a golden rule of conduct. Thus, though degraded to money-lenders and old-clo' men, they were scholars and utopians at home, and their exterior semblance belied the immensity of their soul. For these decrees of their self-governing communities, from which we have selected but a few specimens out of one city, express the true being of the medieval Jew, and are the genuine sources for his history. The restrictive decrees of Christian rulers, hemming

him in more and more, increased the longing for escape, which could be satisfied only by a more intensive cultivation of his rigidly separated plot. "Il faut cultiver notre jardin," he might have said to the Pangloss of his day. He refused to accept the fate from which there was no real escape except by transforming it ideally. Once more, in those ghettos of Ashkenaz, so sordid, so dirty, so unsavoury, yet so regularly brightened every Friday night with the white cloth on the Sabbath table, the world and the dream changed places. The spurned Jew, the meanest of God's creatures, had two soul-sides, like Browning's lover—one to face the world with, one to show the *Torah* how he loved her.

Such writers as Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) in Germany, and Robert Fludd (1574-1637) and Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688) in England, though worth careful study in this context, would take us too far in this place from the object defined above. We have still to learn how the Jews obtained their Cabala and what it meant to them, and it will be simplest to follow this inquiry along two lines: (1) The flowering of Jewish mysticism, and (2) the preparation for it on Jewish soil. We shall learn much more along these lines of Jewish history in the Middle Ages than from a recital, common in the text-books, of persecutions, plunderings, expulsions, of money-lending, coin-clipping, peddling.

§ 3. JEWISH MYSTICISM.

There are mystical elements in all religions. We spoke just now of the Jew showing his *Torah* how he loved her. At *Simchat Torah* ("The Rejoicing of the Law"), which concludes the autumn festival of the booths (Tabernacles), occurs the ceremony of the *Chatanim*, or bridegrooms. The *Chatan Torah*, or Bridegroom of the Law, reads in Synagogue the final portion (lesson) from Deuteronomy, and the *Chatan Bereshith*, or Bridegroom of Genesis, follows him at once with the opening portion from Genesis. Thus, the cycle of *Torah* is unending: it is a circle which constantly revolves, and at that one moment of its revolution its lovers rejoice over it as over a bride. Again, in the *Zohar*, the Talmud of the Cabalists, the seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost are called the "courting days of Israel the bridegroom with the *Torah*, his bride." In this love-symbolism, which is repeated in the name of "the Bride" for the Sabbath, and in the traces of nature-worship which survive in some spring and harvest festivals still sacred in the Hebrew calendar, there is early warrant for the ecstasy imparted by ardent devotees into ceremonial observance. The mystic love-lore is present from the start, with all its powers for noble or erotic teaching, and the authorities, at whose head we may cite Chief Rabbi Dr. J. H.

Hertz,* correctly refer its origin, in post-Biblical times, to the strange group of the Essenes in Judæa. These people, whose number is estimated at never more than four thousand, were more near to monks than any sect in Israel before or since. They were pietists before Pietism, and before the re-flaming of their Pietism in the Hassidism† of their descendants in the eighteenth century. They disappeared—petered out, is a just epithet—in the second century of the Christian era; a fate partly due, perhaps, to their abstinence from marriage. They formed a kind of monastic order, recruited from outside by novitiate and under oath, and they were communists in the sense that their members could own no private property. Frankly, despite some information in the writings chiefly of Josephus, we know very little about the Essenes; but they believed in the immortality of the soul, and in a kind of heaven across the ocean, where the souls of the good inhabit a region without rain, snow,

* In the *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1912, and also in an Address at the City Literary Institute, January 22, 1929, in a course of lectures on Jewish history and literature, delivered under the auspices of the London County Council.

† “The last link in the chain of Jewish mysticism. . . . The unique mystic movement, which, in spite of great opposition from official Judaism, and in spite of all ex-communication and attempts to thrust it out, still remained within the fold, whilst the other religious movements which arose in the Exile . . . were cast out.” See *Leaders of Hassidism*, by Dr. S. A. Horodezky, London, 1928; and see Ch. VIII., § 3, below.

or torrid heat. By the same token, we are told that they were aware of the healing qualities of herbs and believed in the properties of stones—an ample *materia medica* for magicians—and that they manipulated an extensive angelology.

There, plainly, is Jewish mysticism, and the seed-plot of the later Cabala, sown, it is to be observed for historical accuracy, at least two centuries earlier than the Roman neo-Platonist, Plotinus. Moreover, going back from the Es-senes to the Bible which inspired them, we may draw a straight line between “the visions of God,” recorded in the first chapter of the prophet Ezekiel, and such familiar passages in modern literature, from Dante downwards, as Goethe’s “Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichniss,” Vaughan’s “I saw Eternity the other night,” Marvell’s “At my back I always hear Time’s winged chariot hurrying near,” Blake’s “Heaven in a wild flower,” or, summarily, the *Prelude* of Wordsworth, which has been well described as the classical authority on Platonism in poetry. And that line, if accurately drawn, must take us from its Hebrew fount through channels of Hebraism proceeding from it. The stream is enriched and enlarged by waters flowing from Hellenic springs, but it is older than the Greeks. It came to full expression before Plato, and, though its Jewish revival in the thirteenth century was fed by Hebraized neo-Platonists, such as Avicbron (ibn

Gabirol), the stream was stronger than its tributaries, and independent refreshment was drawn from it. "The view of the Cabala," says Dr. Hertz, "as a parasitic intruder into Jewish thought is radically false. An ever larger number of scholars are at last recognizing that Jewish mysticism has its sources in Jewish antiquity; that it develops according to inner laws; and that it runs parallel to, and in constant interaction with, the other currents of Jewish life." We would be added to this growing number, and it will be particularly our task to try to distinguish the mystic current from the other currents, and, recognizing each as native to Jewish genius, to evaluate them separately in action.

First, then, we should follow the stream. The book of Genesis, Ezekiel, the Essenes, Philo, and that splendid shepherd-hero, Akiba, are obvious halting-places, and need not detain us now, save to note that to Akiba is due the inclusion of the Song of Songs in the sacred canon, thus admitting a fertile source of love-imagery and mystic lore into orthodox Judaism. It is in the Gaonic period, however, and particularly towards the latter part of the sixth to the tenth centuries, after the completion of the Talmud, that the stored treasures, collected by folk-loreists and similar disciples of Autolycus, were rifled for systematic use. Let us turn for a moment to a prayer, composed in the Aramaic tongue in

Babylonia some time after the third century, and still printed in the Hebrew ritual. It prays that "salvation may come" (*yekum porkan*—the prayer is identified by these words) "to the teachers and rabbins of the holy community, who are in the land of Israel, and the land of Babylon, and [in all the lands of the dispersion;] unto the heads of the academies, the chiefs of the captivity, the heads of the colleges, and the judges in the gates, . . . and unto all who occupy themselves with the study of the *Torah*." Times changed. The rise of Islam, the gradual decay of Sura and Pumbeditha, and the extension of Jewish learning to Africa and Spain, had caused the words "all the lands of our dispersion" to be inserted in modern formularies. But the "chief of the captivity" was still functioning in the eleventh century, and academies, colleges and scholars' conventions (still known as *Kallah*, a term probably carrying a symbolic reference to a wedding assembly) continued to flourish for the study of *Torah*; and it was in these later centuries, and in the more relaxed surroundings which dispersion had brought to tradition, that new liberties were taken with old learning. Big names were attached to little studies. A partial authorship was misrepresented as complete authority, and the casual curiosity of reverend ancients was exploited by irreverent modern doctors. One result of this popular redaction of the uncharted

legends of olden time was that "the supernatural element in the old Midrashic literature, the mysteries of creation, the existence of angels, spirits and demons, the nature of the soul, the relation of God to man, the most sublime objects that agitate man's mind, also the strange and the bizarre, the fantastic and the marvellous, as astrology, magic—all these begin to precipitate in various books, each of which is devoted more or less to a single subject."* Or, as Dr. Hertz puts it more succinctly: "Thus arises Practical Cabala, a sad aberration of the human mind."

The stream is now in full flood, and the first considerable cargo which has floated down the intervening thousand years is the *Sefer Yetzirah*, or Book of Creation (Formation)—the earliest specimen of philosophical literature in the Hebrew tongue. Though philosophical, it was the philosophy of an age in which there was a conspicuous lack of what Lord Haldane used to desiderate as "clear thinking." Thus, the mere fact that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were likewise used as numerals confused and exhilarated thought. In the borderland between ideas and tokens it bogged the footsteps of enthusiasts in all kinds of esoteric speculation. Letters could be unfolded into Pythagorean mathematics, and numerals could be clothed with neo-Platonic

* *Aspects of the Hebrew Genius*, edited by Leon Simon, London, 1910; p. 154.

allegories. We are to remember, too, that a philosopher at that time had not necessarily graduated at a university. Ascetics, flagellants, theosophists, herbalists, astrologers, visionaries—they were all philosophers of sorts. Where much was hidden, they dwelt in the occult. They deduced from natural phenomena seeming-supernatural signs and tokens. *Tout finit par des chansons* was said of France when reason was dethroned, and *tout finit par de Messianisme* might have been said of medieval Jewry, when the intellect was starved of all sustenance except the sacred books of the Jews. The tradition (*Kabbalah*) of secret writings, revealing by symbols to the initiate the date of the Messiah, whose advent would open all doors and restore all righteous souls, was too precious to be lost, and the Cabalists exploited at length, in the leisurely and credulous thirteenth century, the dim fancies and speculative musings of the mystics of the Gaonic era.

The restoration of righteous souls played its part. Gogol, the Russian novelist of the nineteenth century, wrote a book of mordant wit called *Dead Souls*, the motive of which was the temptation which assailed a collector of taxes to multiply the number of serfs on the estates in his ledgers. He included the dead souls in his returns. A multiplication of soul-returns likewise became ultimately an industry of Jewish

mystics. The Messiah could not appear till all souls originally created had spent their allotted span on earth, and his expected advent was a signal, accordingly, for multiplying immediately the opportunities of earthly incarnation. Children just out of puberty were hurried into marriage, in order that more bodies might be provided for the residence of souls, and in such earthly-heavenly ideas, such spiritual-carnal practices, we see how Messianic prophecy might lead to orgies of official lust.

The road from East to West led through Spain, where Rabbi Azriel of Vallodolid (1160-1238) wrote a kind of commentary on the *Sefer Yetzirah*, elevating it to the dignity of a philosophic system, and whence Rabbi Abraham Abulafia carried the doctrine to Italy, and sought, by prayer and fasting and other manifestations of election, to dictate the purpose of Christianity. It was he who tried to prevail on Pope Nicholas III. to welcome the Messiah of the Jews, whom he expected in 1296. But greater than the individual names of Azriel, Abulafia, Nachmanides (d. 1270), and Moses de Leon (1250-1305), who filled that century of Jewish learning with an increasing hope of appointed destiny, and of a harmony between inner desire and outer experience, was the sudden vogue of the *Zohar*, the book of "Brightness" out of an eastern sky. Its arrival was an apparition. Some readers ascribed it to

Moses de Leon, but Moses himself, who knew better, was shrewd enough to father it on the sages of his race, and more particularly on a certain Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, who had taken cover from the Romans in the second century, and who was reported by de Leon to have composed the *Zohar* in the cave in which he lay hid for thirteen years. Old or new, or, more probably, partly both, it caught on, like Byron among the bourgeois, and for much the same cause. It owed its contagion to a quality of surprise, responding to, yet shocking, expectation. It satisfied a want which they had hardly dared to formulate, and it ran like a flame through the Jewries—a torch set to dry wood, as has been well said. But the torch and the wood were in the same kind. The leaping fire of realizable longing was released like sunshine out of coal. It was all one in that hour of revelation, when the stubble ate up the flame. The drab life, never apathetic, was fulfilled with passion by the *Zohar*. The prison-house and the escape were one experience. They who waited were those who won, and the extension of *Torah* was its goal. Heaven was home, and up and down the shining spaces which opened out of the shabby, narrow streets rode numbered angels in painted chariots, escorting lowly souls to the height of bliss. Every prayer was pregnant with meaning, every letter was sensitive with might.

The *Zohar* was multiplied in its own century, and printed in the next. Its brightness shone on the fugitives from England, France, Portugal and Spain, consoling them with an articulate promise of a scheduled redemption at an appointed time. The old, vague phrases of consolation—"The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" (Ps. cxviii. 6), etc.—were supplied with footnotes and commentary, like a text illuminated for a child. The adult worshipper became a child. His streaming mother-comfort of Jerusalem was made homely, familiar, near. An increasing Messianism tempered the harsh wind for the lambs of God, shorn by Gentile cruelty. The very cruelty proved the instant Messiah: all the parts fitted, as in a fairy-tale. And they wrote fairy-tales in those crooning centuries. "It was the *Zohar's* assertion of the dignity of man, its doctrine of immortality made altogether dependent on conduct" (surely the fairies had invented it!), "as much as its poetical spirit stimulating the imagination and filling the soul with mysterious awe, that conquered the Jewish world for it," says Dr. Hertz; and he tells us of a certain doctor, Isaac Luria (1533-1572), "a Jewish Plotinus and Hegel in one," who taught that "ours is the world of husks, not of realities. The individual Israelite can help in the work of cosmic redemption by meditation, fasts, ablutions and vigils. These have a practical, theurgic purpose—Messianism.

Due and whole-hearted performance of these ascetic devotions hastens, nay, can accomplish Israel's redemption."

We might break off here to reflect on the development of this idea in our own literature. Thus, the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century were subject to the same influence as Isaac Luria, and when S. T. Coleridge called them "Plotinists rather than Platonists," he expressed in an epigram their filiation to the Hebrew mystics studied by Plotinus.* We might even quote from George Meredith his distinction between the senses and the Thought:

"They are the vessel of the Thought.
The vessel splits, the Thought survives.
Nought else are we, when sailing brave,
Save husks to raise and bid it burn.
Glimpse of its livingness will wave
A light the senses can discern
Across the river of the death,
Their close,"

for that light is ultimately derived from the "Brightness" of the *Zohar*, and the older visions upon which it was founded. But the problem of Hebraism in English poetry, though awaiting detailed exploration, would take us too far from our present purpose. Here and now, we are better able to understand the sudden rise and fall of Sabbatai Zevi, the pseudo-Messiah from Smyrna,

* A.D. 204-70; founder of neo-Platonism, as a formal doctrine partly derived from Philo Judæus and his Jewish forebears.

and even to measure the relative values of what was false and true in his "complex," or make-up. It cannot all have been false, despite his collapse into doorkeeper to the Sultan, for that would be equivalent to falsifying the theurgic purpose of the fasts and ablutions, the meditation and the vigils which he had performed, and which had been performed, with patient faith, by the spell-bound dreamers who preceded him. We read of his studious boyhood, when he preferred books to games, and of his ascetic youth, when he espoused the *Torah* instead of ardent maidens. We are told how he was honoured in his own family, and how his merchant father, unlike the elder Heine, made it easy for Sabbatai to be idle with the business of his soul. We read of the alluring effect of his personal appearance, which seems to have resembled that of Herzl, the prophet of Zionism in the nineteenth century. "His tall, majestic figure, with its sweeping black beard, was discerned in the dusk, passionately pleading at the graves of the pious. He was seen at dawn standing motionless upon his bulging wooden balcony that gave upon the Golden Horn."* We read of his miracles, his singing-voice, his hypnotic power, the infatuation of his acolytes, all the range and depth of the superstition of the day.

* From I. Zangwill, "The Turkish Messiah," in *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, London, 1898. This brilliant impressionistic sketch should be read.

For it was not only Israel's day. "Annus Mirabilis," 1666, celebrated by Dryden in a poem of that name, was a year in which wonders were expected. The unique combination of cyphers enhanced in untutored minds the cosmic impression of an end and a new beginning which was reflected from the acts of princes and the writings of thinkers in the age. Everything was grand, or grandiose. The *grand monarque*, Louis XIV., in France; the *grosse Kurfürst*, Frederick William, in Brandenburg; Queen Christina in Sweden; Oliver Cromwell in England a few years before; Peter the Great in Russia a few years later; these were among the rulers of Europe who developed the statecraft of Machiavelli into the benevolent despotism which led to revolution. Again, round about that year, consider the majesty of its thought. Hugo Grotius had died in 1645 and Descartes in 1650, as the guest of Queen Christina at Stockholm. Milton was Cromwell's Latin secretary, and had completed his *Paradise Lost*. The Royal Society of London was incorporated in 1662. Newton (1642-1727) was discovering the secret of gravitation. Spinoza was meditating his tractate, *Theologico-Politicus* (1670), of which it has been well said that "every form of representative government is a democracy in Spinoza's sense." We need not multiply these examples; "the intellectual atmosphere of the age was impregnated by the spirit of Grotius and

Spinoza, the inaugurators of a new historical method and of a naturalistic conception of cosmic law.”* These words summarize a series of facts which would take us too far from our proper theme; but it is relevant to that theme to remark that Spinoza, as pietist and revivalist, encouraging vision and feeling under the laws of mystical imagination, looked forward through Wesley to Wordsworth, and looked back to the teachers of his own race. Seen as a whole, in the moving picture of life in Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century, there is more likeness than difference in the scenes of Uriel Acosta in Amsterdam in 1640, of Manasseh ben Israel in London in 1655, and of Sabbatai Zevi in Turkey in 1666. To the central name in this trio we shall come back, after our sojourn in the valley of Ashkenaz. Here we note that the Jews of the seventeenth century had learned to gild common life in a dream, thus proving their descent from Solomon, whose dream of conduct in Gibeon came true (1 Kings iii. 5-14).

§ 4. THE PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION.

The problem was this. The end of the Gaonic period—and it will be remembered that the Excellency, or Gaon, was the scholastic head of Jewry in *Galuth* (Dispersion)—dates from the

* *Cambridge Modern History*, v., 754, and see Ch. IX. below.

eleventh century, when the great Babylonian colleges at Sura and Pumbeditha faded into insignificance. But even before that event, the authority and learning of the Geonim had for some time proved inadequate to the needs of the most distant of the dispersed Jews. The boundaries of the *Galuth* had been moved back. New communities had arisen in the West of Europe which the writ of the Geonim could not reach. It might reach them physically, though, even so, actual contact was not always easy; but it could not reach them in any truer effective sense. Intellectually, life in those communities reflected the lower level of culture common to Latin Christendom, and the level of intellectual attainment corresponded to, and was partly caused by, the constant fighting, anarchy, oppression, which marked the era of feudalism and the Crusades. The Jews of Spain and even of Italy could and did feel the spiritual bond connecting them with the tradition of the Eastern centres. Their needs might differ a little: the law and the case might not always fit; but, after all, the Geonim were a long way off, and an oracle has a habit of being obscure. Still, there was a centre, and a circumference; a Head of the Exile, and its members. In France and Germany, however, an adjustment was less practicable. No honeyed diplomatist could assure the Jews north of the Pyrenees, "Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées." The natural

barrier could not be demolished by all the wisdom and learning of the Geonim because Jewish experience on the far side was not the same as Jewish experience on the near. "It was inconceivable," says the historian,* "that the Geonim living under Moslem rule should have a correct understanding of the problems confronting their brethren in the new, slowly-developing European States." A main point was, the difference in the rule. This altered the problems to be faced, throwing back those Western communities on their own powers of self-government, and compelling them to observe the national frontiers of the States in which they were placed; "in these matters the Geonim could not help them at all." They had to help themselves. The problem, therefore, for the Jews of Ashkenaz, as distinct from their brethren of Sepharad, was how to supply for their various communities, and out of their own resources, the authority centralized, in the first millennium of the Christian era, in the schools of Judæa or Babylonia.

That authority, or writ, was both secular and religious. The Jew had to make his own laws, because the provisions of the feudal code presumed that every litigant was a Christian. Moreover, he preferred his own courts, because of immemorial tradition. But tradition could not supply the lacunæ in the code. As the Jew was

* L. Finkelstein, *op. cit.*, 4.

driven further from the soil, and dealt, more and more exclusively, with movable property, he had to devise laws suitable to his new mode of life. Those laws, replacing the code of an originally agricultural people, had to be fitted to the needs of traders outside the land, possession of which formed the basis of Christian society. And the local secular code was matched to some extent by a local religious code. Judaism was still one religion, but the details of its practice and observance now began to vary from land to land, and even from town to town. The *minhag* (custom, usage) of ritual was not identic for the Sephardim and Ashkenazim, who differed even in their pronunciation of Hebrew; and Synagogue services to this day are conducted according to the usage of "the Spanish and Portuguese" (Sephardic) or "the German and Polish" (Ashkenazic) Jews.* But, apart from this main distinction, there were also minor differences in secular custom and religious *minhag*, between the jealous and separate states and townships of Western Europe. Thus, the problem of constituting an authority, equal in weight and influence to the rule of the Geonim, was complicated by the fact that the distant communities, which lacked hegemony, were not homogeneous. What was custom, or *minhag*, in one place might not suit conditions in another. Prague and

* See Note 12.

Frankfort might be subject to local needs. The large serenity, conventional in places, and sometimes very thinly overlaid, had departed from Jewish communal life, after a cumulative experience of extortions, deprivations, and degradations. The policy typified in 1215 by Innocent III.'s badge grew in intensity and perverseness during the ensuing decades. It reached its height in the middle of the fourteenth century, in the genial age of Petrarch and Boccaccio. The currents of fellowship and humanism, which flowed so freely between the living and the dead, between the researchers of antiquity and the repositories of the treasures which they rifled, froze at the touch of a Jew. Jews, too, had an "antiquity" in safe keeping, on which a Petrarch of Hebraism might have founded fresh "epistles to dead authors"; indeed, a time was to come, as we have indicated, when Pico and Reuchlin were to discover its present value. It was a divine of the second century who had thought to pay Plato a compliment by designating him "Moses Atticus." But, meanwhile, the Jewish outlaw from society was not admitted even to the companionship of the dead. It was not till the eighteenth century that Joabin began to oust Shylock, in common or even in cultivated opinion. The years 1348-49 may be selected as the peak of popular anti-Jewish feeling in the countries which we are now considering—the countries in

which a new authority had to be found to regulate Jewish life. They were the years of plague in Western Europe, and the calamity which robbed Petrarch of Laura, and left us his matchless lyric verse, was ascribed by ignorance and malice to the initiative of the Jews. Their very virtues counted against them. Such measure of immunity as they owed to their more wholesome and less exposed way of life increased the suspicion of their guilt; and though the reigning Pope, Clement VI., sought to check the fury of the populace, it was too late to undo the evil effects of segregation and insulation. The Jews had been set apart to be mocked at; a great terror stalked through the land; it was the fault of the separate Jews. We gladly pass the horrors by, but the historic fact is undeniable, that, after the middle of the fourteenth century, "the Ghetto's plague" was added to "the garb's disgrace," or, in the unadorned narrative of the historian: "From that time on, the Jews were enclosed in special quarters, the gates admitting to their abode being locked each night that none might leave or enter. Every city and dukedom enacted laws requiring special 'Jewish oaths' in lawsuits, thus further humiliating the Jews."*

It was in this deepening humiliation, and at an unbridged distance from the East, that the leaders of the Western communities set about their

* Margolis and Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 407.

difficult task. The escape by Cabala we have noted, but daily life could not be escaped. The long, slow hours had to be filled, as the months were added up to years, and ghetto-habits and a ghetto-bend became the second nature of the Jew. Those long, slow hours in narrow streets are hardly imaginable today. The horizon was constricted, literally and figuratively, and artificial means had to be invented to supply the missing sense of space. Religion was expanded to an art of life, in which bound men expatiated freely. Its holy days were holidays, and the grand tour of a young Jew in the Middle Ages was a journey through the ghettos in search of famous expounders of Hebrew lore. These Rabbis answered questions framed to the needs of the new time; and gradually, surely, deliberately, they built up, for their communities, or dioceses, a code of practical Judaism which occupied and satisfied its observers. Defiance of the code, it may be added, was punishable by *cherem*, or excommunication, which was a social as well as a religious penalty. We saw in the signal instance of Acosta how it cut its victim off from communication with all the contacts which make life tolerable, and material ruin was a concomitant of spiritual extrusion.

The first of these masters—the father of Western Rabbinism, as he has been called—was Gershom ben Jehudah, who lived from about

960 to 1030, in the very epoch of the declining power of the Eastern Gaonate, and who exercised in Central Europe, under the modest style of Rabbi, not Gaon, even more than a Gaon's authority. He was known as the Light of the Exile (*Meor-ha-Gola*), and by his insight and force of character, with no tradition of office behind him, Gershom spread that welcome light, replacing in Germany, France and Italy the fading Gaonic stars. The marriage-laws ascribed to his initiative helped to found Jewish family life in stricter accordance with Western customs. Thus, he forbade plural marriage, and, though bigamy had not been common, it was suitable to the time and place that monogamy should be recognized as Jewish law. We need not discuss the details of the civil ordinances enacted by Rabbi Gershom. Their interest was partly local, and many of them arose out of the new circumstances of Jewish life: "The Jewish situation to-day is totally different," we are reminded, "from what it was in his day, but the Jewish family has endured, and his *Takkanot* (ordinances) in regard to it are of the utmost importance in Jewish religious life in modern times."*

The next heir to Gershom was Rashi, so-called from the initial letters of his style and name—*Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac*. He was born in 1040, and died in 1105, and the circumstances of Jewish

* Finkelstein, *op. cit.*, 23.

life deteriorated in his time. The economic pressure which had driven Jews off the land grew sharper during the Crusades, and their hold even on movable property was becoming more and more precarious. The wealthier Jews converted their goods into money; the poorer Jews carried their merchandise on their backs; and all Jews had to accommodate themselves to conditions in which they could pack up what they owned and move swiftly and silently from town to town. One of Gershom's ordinances had prescribed that no Jew should rent a tenement from which another Jew had been unjustly evicted, and this neighbourly, self-denying law illustrates the insecurity of Jewish residence. The opening out of the Levant, with its consequent encouragement to trade rivals, and the closing down of money-lending by canon law, which must have invented the Jew if it had not found him, are commonly accepted facts of history, and they likewise find their reflection in Rashi. But the main work of this great leader was his popularization of Jewish learning. He did his best to furnish his brethren, in their passage through these difficult straits, with a rule of life equivalent in authority to that promulgated from the East; and he bettered that best in the sense that he fabricated a new key to the old way. Rashi effected for the Babylonian Talmud what Erasmus desiderated for the Vulgate Bible. He made it

everybody's book. He purified its text, and supplied it with a running commentary, which is still incorporated in every edition of it. His labours illuminated the ghettos from generation to generation, remitting to studies of scholarship and interpretation, and to exercises of piety and practice, the stricken victims of economic revolution who had been whipped out of the land into commerce and out of commerce into usury.

The problem visualized by Gershom in the dawn of the Christian Middle Ages, which brought so much woe to the Jews, was solved at last in the ghettos by a more rigid orthodoxy and a stricter cultivation of Jewish learning. The Jews in the valley of Ashkenaz looked up more sheerly to the hills. The very rigour of observance, while it concentrated expectation on the Messiah, increased the conviction of his nearness, and the tension, so painfully strained, might be as suddenly relaxed. It would be fascinating to pursue this story through the successive phases of its development, starting from Rashi's clever family of sons-in-law and pupils, the most distinguished of whom was his grandson, Jacob ("Tam," the perfect), son of Meir. Tam died in 1171, after a harsh experience of anti-Semitism at Blois. He takes high rank among the "Tosaphists," or "Supplementers" of Rashi's Talmudic commentary, who stretch out into a long line of eminent Hebraists, and who are linked in

places with the mystics of their race. Such a teacher of mysticism was Joseph Karo (1488-1575), who reached Safed on Galilee from Spain, and who worked for more than thirty years at Talmudic and cognate studies. Karo's *Shulchan Aruch* ("Prepared Table" of Jewish law) is the fine flower of Hebrew learning, and still ranks as an indispensable guide to Jewish religious life. The authorities for this popular code were contained in the erudite volumes to which he had devoted so many years, and Karo is unique among scholars as a labourer for the many and the few. His rabbinical circle at Safed included Luria the Cabalist, who, as noted above, went before the Turkish Messiah, Sabbatai Zevi. But we must resist the temptation of this excursion. We are concerned with the contribution of the Jews to the civilization of the Christian era, and it is hardly relevant to our topic to examine in detail their recoil from Christian contacts into the safe fastnesses of the ghetto. We are aware that they lived there through several centuries, and that their adaptation to that environment—to employ the conventional phrase—was a triumph of purposeful evolution. It was a victory of mind over matter, or of spirit over flesh, unparalleled in human history, and was attained chiefly by a progressive skill in expressing material and carnal desires in terms of intellect and soul. The consecration of the commonplace, and its trans-

formation by other-worldly values, which is of the essence of Mosaic legislation, was perfected in those huddled homes by the successors and disciples of Gershom, Rashi, and his "supplementers." This inner chapter of Jewish history, as monotonous almost as it is long, is truer, though less familiar, than Christian narratives of Jewish usury or Jewish narratives of Christian hate. Or, at least, it is the commentary on those texts. But here, save in broken hints, is not the right place to tell it. It belongs to the separate history of the Jews, who were found now by the Christian nations, round about the middle of the seventeenth century, in a jostle of real and ideal causes invoking or impelling a new adjustment.

CHAPTER VIII

TRANSITION

§ I. SEQUEL TO THE REFORMATION.

WHAT did the Jews bring back with them from the valley of Ashkenaz and the lost paradise of Spain? It happened, about 1650, that, by devious routes, they began to re-enter the life of Christian Europe. The legend of the Wandering Jew, which had been broadcast in the previous century, was of a deep significance. Its rise and spread in Germany was plainly a sequel to the Reformation, for which Reuchlin, a few years before, by his Hebrew grammar and his defence of the Jews' books, had invoked the aid of the jealous ghettos ; and its rapid vogue in folk-tale and ballad was proof of curiosity about the Jews, and even of unrest as to their condition. Not at all in the sense of a desire to ameliorate that condition, though this, too, may have been felt in a few places, but in the sense of uneasiness, and even of fear. The great wind of reform had stirred the dust of forgotten and unknown lore, as in the earlier epoch of the classical humanists, and it could not be laid again. There is the

well-known story of Johann Pfefferkorn, a bad instrument of good. This pervert from Judaism, who perhaps regretted his apostasy when Hebrew learning was becoming lucrative, got the ear of the Emperor Maximilian, and sought in 1509, when Colet was Dean of St. Paul's, and Christian Humanism, eminent in Erasmus, was leavening many counsels, to secure the suppression of all Hebrew books, excepting only the Old Testament. The controversy lasted for some years, and was carried twice to Rome. Its most permanent issue was the volume of Latin *Letters of Obscure Men*, in which the young bloods of Erfurt University poured ridicule on the obscurantists of Cologne ; but its further and less tangible result was that vague fear of a hidden power, of forces moving secretly in the ghettos, of the *ewige Jude* wandering without rest or haste through the busy streets of a hostile world, which broke out into all kinds of *Judenhetze*, and at last, by a strange series of happenings, brought the Jew again into prominence.

A hidden force behind the scenes : we have to keep this vague idea in mind, as the big men gather on the stage of the seventeenth century in Europe. The Jew is locked up and barred away, but still he is present in the background. Reuchlin had gone before Luther, and after Luther came the religious wars, with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. But Reuchlin had gone to the

Jews for the means to prepare the Reformation, which led to those wars and treaties, and behind Reuchlin was Pico, the ardent student of the Cabala. Pico had studied the Cabala ; Reuchlin had taken a live coal from Pico's altar ; Sabbatai Zevi, trained in Cabalism, was spreading conflagration. For the big men gathered on the stage left room for the coming of the Messiah. We have to keep this idea, too, in mind, vague and impalpable though it be, if we are fully to understand the re-entry of the Jews in Christian Europe. It is imperfectly recognized, though the facts are available to all, how deeply Judaism, or, at any rate, Hebraism, coloured the mind of Europe in those days. Its presence did not in the least, or hardly in the least, affect the treatment of Jewish masses, and but very seldom of individual Jews. If anything, it increased maltreatment. Religious hate and popular fear were always waiting on opportunity, and were communicated by contagion. But the presence was there all the time. The big men moving across the stage, like shadows now that have passed, were susceptible to big ideas. Queen Christina was hostess to Descartes (1649), as was Frederick the Great, later, to Voltaire ; Cardinal Richelieu fathered the French Academy (1637), as Cosimo de' Medici had fathered the Florentine ; and Milton was Latin secretary (1649) to Cromwell. We want to keep this perception on a general level,

but more particularly to our purpose, we may note one small but significant fact. In 1655, Manasseh ben Israel (1604-1657), the Dutch Sephardi who went from Amsterdam on a Jewish mission to Cromwell, published a volume in duodecimo, which was dedicated to Isaac Vossius, the Christian scholar, and illustrated by Rembrandt, the Christian artist. And the title of this book, in a list of Manasseh's writings, was *Piedra Pretiosa* (Precious Stone), "Of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, or the Fifth Monarchy." We shall come back immediately to the Fifth Monarchy men, with their evidence to the sequel of the Reformation, and the part reserved therein for the Jews. Here we would merely observe the collaboration, in a mystic book of this kind, between Vossius, Rembrandt and Manasseh. Vossius had taught Greek to Queen Christina; he had been appointed to a prebend's stall at Windsor, and Bentley wanted to buy his library for the Bodleian. Rembrandt needs no introduction. Yet who was Manasseh ben Israel, that they should listen to his sermon out of a stone? The answer is to be found in the prevailing sense of Hebraism, which, while it might intensify anti-Jewish odium, was among the big ideas of the big men. They afforded it a fearful hospitality. There might be something in it after all, as there might be something in the other big ideas which were making so many changes in the mind of Europe.

It was not—let us be clear about this—an idea which directly benefited the Jews. There was indirect benefit, of course : the transition was being prepared to better times. But the idea, vaguely formulated and in the background, involved some common action with the Jews : some ideal, beneficent action, in which they would be sublimated out of their money-lending into partners in a company of saints. 1700 would be a millennial year. But 1666 should also be fateful, and, after all, the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 had marked the beginning of the dissolution of the Roman power. Add to these millenarian speculations the fact that the language of the Old Testament was common on people's lips ; remember that the Kingdom of Christ could not be established without the conversion of the Jews, and we see, however vaguely, the impress of the sequel to the Reformation on the current of contemporary thought.

Opinions differed as to the part of the Jews. Their readmission to England about this date was not due altogether to the expectation of the contribution which they would make to the Messianic advent. Cromwell saw clearly enough that their return would have present commercial value. But the other and ideal point of view—the view revolving round a big idea—was paramount and prevalent, and the Jewish contribution to this idea has still to be computed. We

may measure it in Cromwell's speeches. He was well disposed, as we are aware, to the return of Jews to this country, and the Messianic motive was partly in his mind. Like Vossius and Rembrandt, and many other leading men of the day, he reacted favourably to that idea. The vocabulary of the camp encouraged it, and the soldiers' belief that they were fighting the Lord's battle, in order that "the powers of this world shall be given into the hands of the Lord and his Saints,"* was matured by the conviction of the divines. The House of Commons listened to sermons, in which the nation's present wars were declared to be a direct preparation for the near Kingdom of Christ, and it became a practical question what should be the relations of the saints of that Kingdom to the existing civil power. At this point Cromwell parted company. There might be something in the big idea, and there was something to be gained from a Jewish influx: "But when they come to such practices," he declared in 1655, "as to tell us that liberty and property are not the badges of the Kingdom of Christ, and tell us

* Said by Colonel Thomas Harrison, on the Agreement of the People, 1649; quoted in *Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men in England during the Interregnum*, by Louise F. Brown. Washington, 1912; p. 15. I am much indebted to this Prize Essay in the ensuing paragraph. There is a touch of violence in my attempt to extract a reference to the Jews from Cromwell's words, "Judaical (*i.e.*, Biblical) law." But there is sufficient warrant from later history.

that, instead of regulating laws, laws are to be abrogated, and indeed subverted, and perhaps would bring in the Judaical law instead of our known laws settled among us—this is worthy every magistrate's consideration." This speech provoked the retort from a contemporary critic, that "the way of a Protector in his speeches, and between them and his actions," should be added to the four things unknown to the author of Proverbs xxx. 18, 19; but no citation from the Scripture which he loved broke Cromwell's resolve to protect his country. We need not follow the details of English history from 1642 to 1660. But we may note that Sir Alfred Lyall pointed out to Professor Trevelyan "the similarity of the early Quakers to an Eastern sect,"* and that there was much in common between Christian mystics in the seventeenth century and mystics of other times and creeds.

Now, returning to Manasseh's book above, we find its prophecy of a Fifth Monarchy repeated again and again by the pamphleteers of the day. The four beasts in the seventh chapter of Daniel were the four empires of history: Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, Rome. The little horn on the head of the fourth beast was variously explained as the Pope, William the Conqueror, or Charles I. The details again do not signify. It is the idea

* *England under the Stuarts*, by G. M. Trevelyan, London, 11th edition, 1924; p. 315 n.

which counts, and this idea, brooding behind the stage on which great men were passing, was the establishment in their day of the "Fifth Monarchy" of Jesus, when the Pope should have been driven from his throne, and the Jews should have returned to their own country, and the Turks should be destroyed, and the saints should rule by "Judaical" law. "To bring about this happy state of things, the saints must watch and pray, seek union among themselves, and keep apart from the world, as a peculiar people, ready, when the time came, to do their part in the pouring out of the seven vials (Rev. xvi.). They should also direct the Government towards the right path, and testify unceasingly against any failure to follow it, secure in the confidence that the Lord would overturn any Government that failed to heed their warnings; and would continue to overturn, until one arose which would do his work (Ezek. xxi. 26, 27)."*

With the plain danger of this incessant testimony, whether to the public peace or to the witnesses themselves, we are not here concerned. It belongs to the history of England, which passed through that peril, as through others. But we are very directly concerned with the place of the Jews in that *galère*—not merely with the part allotted to them in the drama of the advent of the Fifth Monarchy—a part which obviously per-

* L. F. Brown, *op. cit.*, 25.

mitted more leniency to their actual needs, but also with the part which they contributed to the plot, or programme, of the drama. "Subverting the laws," said Cromwell, and the Jews have been called a subversive element, even in controversies of the twentieth century;* and, indeed, if ideas are subversive before violent men betray them in action, the Jews must plead guilty to this charge. They are as guilty as Rousseau was guilty of the crimes of the French Revolutionaries.

There is another way of looking at it. Manasseh ben Israel pleaded with Cromwell for the return of the Jews to England. He did not wholly succeed in his plea. The Protector's invitation in 1652 had to be rescinded in consequence of the Dutch War, and, when it took effect in 1655, and Manasseh arrived in London, there were long delays and debates on the issue. William Prynne wrote a strong demurrer, to which Manasseh replied in his masterly *Vindiciæ Judæorum* (1656), and the discussion, which had been protracted in a Whitehall Conference, led to no definite result. The end was less sensational than the beginning. The Jews slipped in by a side-door, which was opened by their abandonment of Marranism. Those who were already

* See, e.g., "The Jews as a Revolutionary Leaven," by Count de Soissons, *Quarterly Review*, January, 1920, and "A Reply" (by the present writer), *ibid.*, April, 1920.

in England threw off their cloak of Christianity, and professed their fathers' faith without disguise, and thus others of their faith were enabled to join them from abroad. Perhaps it was better so. Neither the medieval status of King's chattels nor the status in Palestine today of a Jewish national home would have been a satisfactory solution of the problem presented by Manasseh. For, behind the positive plea of commercial advantage—of a Rothschild latent in Shylock—which so powerfully appealed to the practical genius of Cromwell, was the ideal plea of the *Piedra pretiosa*, the corner-stone of the temple of the reign of righteousness, by which he established contact with the Fifth Monarchy men. This idea was wrapped up in the books of Ezekiel and Daniel, and in the *Zohar* and other cabalistic writings, explored a hundred and fifty years earlier by the mystics who went before the Reformation. What was Jewish in the idea was not all Jewish in the practice, as worked out by visionaries in later centuries. For one thing, the practice involved a conversion of the Jews to Christianity, which was not contemplated by the prophets of the idea; and, apart from this merely forensic point, the idea was always greater than the practice. It was an idea of perfection, which the Jews had guarded in the ghettos, and which they brought back with them to Christian Europe, when the bars were taken down from their gates. Looking

back across the three hundred years, which have nearly elapsed since Manasseh pleaded for the fellowship of mankind through the restoration of the Jews, the record is perhaps not unworthy of the conversations which took place between the Puritan heirs of the German Reformation and the Spanish refugee in Holland. He had invoked in aid of his mystic book of revelation the services of Vossius and Rembrandt, and who shall say that the philanthropy which they displayed, and the scholarship and art which they represented, have not been exemplified in the subsequent annals of English Jews? In our hospitals, picture-galleries, and seats of learning, in the organization and personnel of charity, fine arts and education, Jews have contributed a full part to the development of English social life, and names among the living and the dead might be cited in support of the contention that they have brought qualities of imagination and daring to political and industrial affairs. All this and more was contained in Manasseh's *Vindiciæ Judæorum* and the *Piedra pretiosa* behind it; and if these reflections seem a little fanciful in the dry light of the present epoch, we are to remember the shadows of the seventeenth century. Manasseh came out of the shade into the sun, in order to claim a place in it for the Jews. Sepharad and Ashkenaz met in him. The circuit of the Wandering Jew, who had haunted the dreams of Christian Europe,

was completed in Manasseh, and there is allegory as well as fact in the record, that, in the very year, or near it, of Manasseh's mission to England, the "bride of the Messiah" out of Poland went to meet the "Messiah" out of Spain. But the story of Israel in Poland, and this momentary contact with Sabbatai Zevi, demands a section to itself.

§ 2. SUMMER AND WINTER IN ASHKENAZ.

First, to round off the allegory, about Sarah, wife of Sabbatai Zevi. Sabbatai's father, Mordecai, was a dragoman in Smyrna, whose ancestor had trekked to the Morea from Spain. This establishes the Spanish end of the story. Mordecai Zevi did business with English houses, and had no doubt heard from his customers, either in jest or in earnest, of the part reserved for the Jews in the unique year to come, 1666. This establishes, albeit a little conjecturally, the contact with the Fifth Monarchy men. Now we start from the other end. In the decade 1648-58, the Jews of Poland were subject to merciless persecution. We shall come to the mass; here we pause at an individual. A young Jewess, whose parents had been massacred, was baptized by nuns. One night she was found, like Ophelia, half-witless in the Jewish cemetery, calling on the ghost of her dead father. The Jews, as fearful of reprisals as they were amazed at her vision,

transported her to Amsterdam, where she had a brother in refuge. This established the contact with the Dutch community. She reverted to Judaism, and, taking the Hebrew name of Sarah, proclaimed herself the appointed bride of the Messiah. She fared through Frankfort to Leghorn, whence news of her reached Sabbatai Zevi, then quitting Jerusalem as the Messiah. They met in Cairo, where their nuptials were celebrated. It is a strange tale of a strange time, in the mystic borderland of religious ecstasy and carnal lust, and we tell it here because it brings together the remote West and the remote East of the Wandering Jew in Europe—from the Sephardim in Spain to the Ashkenazim in Ukraine. The circle was completed in the seventeenth century.

But the story of Israel in Poland, apart from Sabbatai and his bride, is a sadder and less romantic matter. True, there had been the romance of the Chazars in the eighth century, whose reputed Jewish kingdom attracted Hasdai ibn Shaprut in the tenth. But this historical legend, though it founds a claim for the Jews of Russia to a lineage of at least twelve hundred years, never lightened their lot. The Crusades in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and after drove German Jews eastward, and peopled the border-country from Posen to Cracow with German-speaking and German-thinking immigrants. Their superior weight and numbers

overwhelmed the existing Jewish residents, and created conditions of life pregnant with future misery. The very ease of immigration disguised the problems which it was to cause. Life was not harsh in those days—a little less harsh, indeed, than was normal in the common circumstances of urban and rural economy and the constant watchfulness of the Church. Polish Jews might be farmers and peasants; they engaged in commerce and trade, and they enjoyed wide rights of domicile and travel. As in England, they were useful to the rulers, and, if it was a Jewish banker who helped to finance the new University at Cracow (1364), Jews were active, too, as students and teachers. But the mass-immigration continued. The Plague of 1348, and the massacres of Jews which accompanied it, drove fresh victims of the Terror across the border, and restrictive measures rapidly accumulated. With the increasing outlawry of the Jews came increased persecution. We read of a rabbi and thirteen elders at Posen who were burnt alive in 1399, and of a fatal attack on the Jewish quarter at Cracow in 1407. Moreover, if Jews from Germany could cross the frontier into Poland, so, too, could their persecutors, and a Franciscan monk, Capistrano, who had been known as “the scourge of the Jews” in Bavaria, arrived at Cracow in the middle of the fifteenth century. The first ghetto in Poland was founded in a suburb of

Cracow at the end of that century, and existed till 1868.

We need not rehearse the details. In the course of the sixteenth century the Jewish population in Poland and Lithuania is calculated to have risen from about fifty thousand to about three times that number, and even to have reached half a million by the middle of the next century. This rapid increase brought its sequel of persecution and oppression. The Church of Rome refurbished its weapons after the ordeal of the Reformation; its denunciation of heresy and dissent was reinforced by popular prejudice, and toleration of the few was changed to hate of the many. The bloodshed and suffering of the Jews is almost monotonous in its regularity, and it is more to our purpose here to omit that dreary recital, and to note how the Jews of Poland developed for their own protection a series of self-governing institutions, which made the hundred and fifty years closed in 1648 unique, or, at least, remarkable, in Jewish annals. It was a terribly self-involved life. With a particularly high standard of education went a debasement of the currency of language; and an ever closer sense of communal values was accompanied by a waning of the sense of universalism. Jewish historians—Dubnow, for example, in the sixth volume of his monumental work—refer not unjustly to this epoch as comparable in certain

aspects with the golden age of Judaism in Spain. But there was a growing difference. The Ashkenazic ore was inferior to the Sephardic. There was, to change the metaphor, a growing sclerosis of the arteries. Assuming the correctness of this generalization, and admitting at once the higher Rabbinical authority and superior numbers of the Ashkenazim, who are the ancestors of most Jews today, it will be of more than local interest to try to discover the causes. Partly these will be found in the very factors which added strength to Polish Jewry in its efflorescence. The constant increase in their communities, owing to immigration from across the frontier, impelled them to close their ranks, and imposed ever fresh demands on their powers of concentration and organization. They aimed at and acquired more and more the status of self-contained national units. Within those unitary compartments they were never nationally assorted either as wholly Polish or wholly Jewish. Their strength against disturbance and dispossession lay in the self-governing institutions conceded to them in virtue of their numbers, their long residence, and their economic usefulness : after all, they had the example of Joseph Nasi, Duke of Naxos, who died in 1579, and whose immense influence as statesman and financier was a romance of the Sephardic Jews in Turkey. Their weakness lay in the fact that they did not give birth to a Joseph Nasi, and that the con-

venience of the privileges which they enjoyed tended to shut them out more and more from the life of the nation of which they formed a part. Their mixed language is typical of this dual being, and the more they perfected themselves in Yiddish the more imperfect they were in its component associations.

The autonomy vindicated by the Polish Jews was not a long-sighted policy. When King Sigismund Augustus (1548-72), who is said to have corresponded with Joseph Nasi, was able to declare that, since the Jews bore the same burdens as his other townsmen, they should be placed on an equal footing in all respects save religion and law, and when he even forbade in certain districts the use of Saturday as market-day, he was tempting the forces of clerical reaction. And those forces were more readily tempted, partly because the Royal measures, though genuinely inspired by liberalism and enlightenment, were to some extent necessarily dictated by self-interest and greed, and yet more because the conditions of Jewish life in his kingdom did not respond to counsels of liberty and light. It sounds a hard saying, but we believe it to be true that the Jews of Poland in the sixteenth century bought a temporary alleviation and an illusory show of equal rights at a price which their children had to pay. Their "Magna Carta" of 1551, granted by Sigismund Augustus, which bestowed wide powers

of self-government, was matched by no sense of compensatory obligation. To say that they took all and gave nothing would be to misrepresent the very narrow margin of public safety which they precariously enjoyed. But it may fairly be said that they took what was offered with closed hands. They strengthened their communal defences. They consolidated their separate position. They founded an exemplary school system, and produced and encouraged native scholars. Their great Rabbi, Moses Isserles (1530-72), was the successor to Karo, of Safed, and supplied the "cloth," as he called it, for the "table prepared" (*Shulchan Aruch*) of the latter. They made possible the Yiddish literature,* which was later to claim the rank of one of the living literatures of modern Europe; but they never became Poles, by association, tradition, or education. Rightly or wrongly—it is difficult to judge, for they acted by the lights of their own day—they refused the civilization of the Gentiles. They built themselves into *Waads*, or Councils, with their assemblies, synagogues, schools, and courts, and became as little Polish as they might and as fully Jewish as they could. The historian of the Jews in this epoch properly and proudly enumerates the considerable contributions to various departments of Jewish learning which were made by the scholars of Poland. Graetz says, for example, that "three

* See Note 13.

great Rabbinical lights, first both in rank and in priority of time, Shachna, Solomon Luria and Isserles, laid the foundation of an extraordinary advance in the Talmudical school. This Rabbinical triumvirate founded a kind of supremacy in Poland over the Jews of Europe, which was acknowledged on all sides, and the Polish Rabbis maintained their position as leaders up to the end of the eighteenth century. The triumvirate, whose numerous disciples rivalled one another in the study of the Talmud, gradually caused nearly all Polish Jews to become familiar with that book, and eligible for the Rabbinical office." But he warns us that "this excessive study of the Talmud was of no real advantage to Judaism"*; and the historian of the Jewish contribution to the civilization of the Christian era, which is a very different thing, may fitly quote from an even friendlier witness the following illuminating remarks:

"Rabbinical jurisprudence, which occupied almost exclusively the creative intellect of Polish Jewry, left but little room for the cultivation of other branches of knowledge and of literary activity. Writers of a deeper spiritual endowment, and with a genuine interest for current problems of theology, philosophy, ethics, or even the physical sciences, appear but rarely and exceptionally. True, in the first half of the sixteenth century,

* *History of the Jews*, E.T., iv., 680-82.

before the rule of Rabbinical absolutism was supreme, and had matured an intellectual uniformity, we meet even in Poland with men of secular culture, with professional physicians and trained philosophers. . . . But such shy signs of free thinking (*Geistes*) aroused an active opposition on the part of strictly observant students of the Talmud. Thus, Solomon Luria announces with indignation in a letter to Moses Isserles: 'I have seen with my own eyes, that a prayer of Aristotle was used as an example in a prayer-book of the Jewish community school,' by which he referred to excerpts from the Guide for the Perplexed by Maimonides.'*

In this contemporary evidence to the choice by Polish Jewry—unconscious, it may have been, but not the less decisive—of the light within in preference to the light without, of the pillar of fire in darkness, instead of the pillar of cloud by day, of an intensive Jewish learning excluding an extensive general culture, we mark the signs of the cleavage which we have noted in previous chapters, and we see a cause, if not the justification, of the withdrawal of the privileges which they had enjoyed. Autonomy prevented assimilation and led to isolation; the large numbers of the isolated population attracted envy, fear, dislike: and politico-economic prejudice strengthened the opposition of the jealous Church. Lecky says

* S. Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des juedischen Volkes* (German translation), vi., 369-70.

in a passage which is justly famous in Jewish anthologies, and a part of which we have quoted before: "While the intellect of Christendom, enthralled by countless superstitions, had sunk into a deadly torpor, in which all love of inquiry and all search for truth were abandoned, the Jews were still pursuing the path of knowledge, amassing knowledge, and stimulating progress with the same unflinching constancy that they manifested in their faith. They were the most skilful physicians, the ablest financiers, and among the most profound philosophers." But the testimony, valid in many countries, was not valid in Poland in the seventeenth century, when the devout and learned Solomon Luria was expressing shocked surprise at a mention of Aristotle in Jewish textbooks. The physicians, philosophers and poets, from Jehudah Halevi to Spinoza, who combined Hebraism with Hellenism, and who, in the earlier centuries, had fathered a renaissance of learning and had nursed the resources of the Reformation, had been made of sterner stuff—sterner to resist the fear of foreign manners and enlightenment, against which their Polish brethren closed their books. After all, it is a feeble god which can be worshipped only in a safe, and education in such worship, however profound in scholarship, must be an inculcation rather than a drawing-out.

The incidental reference to Jews in non-specialist histories of Europe is nowhere better

illustrated (unless, perhaps, in the history of the Reformation) than in the story of Poland after the 'Thirty Years' War. The Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which sowed the seeds of many wars, including that of 1914-18, threatened Poland by the rise of Sweden under Gustavus Adolphus and of Brandenburg under the Great Elector, each of whom was a Protestant prince. The consequent weakening of Poland brought her into conflict with the Cossacks of the Ukraine. In the very year of the treaty, these took advantage of Poland's difficulties, and, by a well-timed rebellion, offered their allegiance to Alexis of Russia. "The yoke of Poland," adds the historian, "had always sat heavily upon the Cossack tribes. Proud, independent, and high-spirited by nature, they could not brook the insolence of the Polish nobles or tamely submit to the rapacity and extortion of their Jewish stewards."* The incidental reference is inadequate, even if we join to it the admission that the landed aristocracy of Poland enjoyed a monopoly of power, in which "justice and patriotism shrank and withered before the claims of privilege and selfishness." The Jewish reaction to these conditions, when the storm broke in the middle of the seventeenth century, has still to be filled in, between the lines of the insolence of the nobles

* *Periods of European History : V. The Ascendancy of France.*
By H. O. Wakeman, London, 1910 ; p. 281.

and the rapacity of their stewards. The serfs of the Ukraine rose against both, and eminent Rabbis, such as Lippmann Heller and Sabbatai Cohen, instituted fast-days and wrote hymns to commemorate the Jewish martyrs. We might cite from our text-books* a bare outline of the horrors of those years, which bowed the back of the Polish Jew in a perpetual ghetto bend. True, Dr. Israel Abrahams says somewhere, in one of his always delightful books: "What some Jews ignorantly miscall the 'ghetto bend' really derives from a reverential pose towards the near-by Glory. The modern Jew prides himself justly on his manly stature; he need not misinterpret his father's humbler pose." But even at the risk of this humane rebuke, we would venture to trace at least an arc of that typical "bend" to experience of the terror of the Cossacks. The ringleted, bowed, secretive, obsequious, esurient Polish Jew acquired in self-defence characteristics which he did not inherit, and which cried out for caricature in comic journals. The rough humour of street urchins could not resist them; and when emancipation rose out of the bed of religious toleration and economic self-interest, they went to form the typical Jewish figure which shocked the nobles at Western Courts and surprised the squires in English coverts.

Still omitting the tale of woe, familiar by awful

* See, *e.g.*, Margolis and Marx, *op. cit.*, ch. lxxiv.

repetition of wholesale massacre and individual martyrdom,* we may trace to the same experience that revived sense of political nationality of which the "National Home" in Palestine, authorized for establishment in 1917, was the final material expression. It was not the Prophets' dream. It was not a fulfilment of the hope of Jerusalem Delivered (*Gerusalemme Liberata*), which had been cherished since Ælia Capitolina was built on the ruins of the Jewish city. The approach to Jerusalem was changed. The perspective of vision was altered. The whole object of these stricken communities was to reconstruct as firmly as they might the broken foundations of their national life. The *Waad*, or Council, of the Four Lands (Great Poland, Little Poland, Galicia and

* " . . . The Jews were not allowed to escape, and ten thousand of them were butchered. Three hundred of the Jewish notables, all clad in shrouds and wrapped in their praying-shawls, awaited the blood-thirsty soldiers in the synagogues, and there they were done to death. . . . In the spring of 1649, fresh atrocities were committed, and many more Jewish communities destroyed. . . . In the same year (1654), as the cities of White Russia and Lithuania were conquered, the Jewish residents were exterminated or expelled. . . . They were set upon and butchered (1655). . . . In approved Cossack fashion, the Poles perpetrated frightful massacres among the Jews of Great and Little Poland. . . . Between the Muscovite and Polish horrors the Jews felt, in the language of the prophet Amos, as if they were fleeing from a lion only to meet a bear. The toll of Jewish lives taken during the decade from 1648 to 1658 was estimated at one hundred thousand at the lowest. Jewish refugees were to be met with all over Europe and Asia."—Margolis and Marx, *op. cit.*, pp. 554-56.

Volhynia) hastened to repair its shattered powers, in order to restore a semblance of protection and a centre of order for the driven and chaotic multitude. And this aim governed Jewish thought and directed the national idea throughout Ashkenaz. It was a real instead of an ideal aim. National institutions, such as had afforded Polish Jews a measure of security in the shelter of King Sigismund Augustus, became the norm of the spiritual ideal, which had flung its towers to the stars and had expatiated in the paths of heaven. Zion was deromanticized and repoliticized. Lord Melchett (Sir Alfred Mond), a leading Zionist, has declared in a public speech that "Jerusalem was a romance in 1921; in 1928 it was a proposition." But its divestiture of romance and assumption of business properties may be dated more accurately from an earlier period. "The bride of the Messiah" in 1650 was not content with a heavenly bridegroom.

There is this to be added, however, and it forms an important addendum. If the true object of education is to teach pupils how to learn, no educational system, it may be said, was more purposive or efficient than that of the rabbinical schools in Poland. *What* they taught really mattered very little (though, unfortunately, they did not know it); *how* they taught mattered immensely, and created a habit of learning which stood the pupils in good stead through

generations to come. The aim of the so-called *pilpul*, which was the name for Talmudic casuistry, was to sharpen the learner's wit. Not truth, but verisimilitude, was the goal; not logic, but ratiocination, the approach to it; and this species of mental gymnastics proved of the utmost value, not to knowledge, but to training. There was no increase in knowledge, for the material was always the Talmud, but there was an immeasurable increase in the exercise of the faculties for attaining it. Jacob Polak, of Nuremberg and Prague, who taught at Cracow and died about 1530, is reputed as the father of this method, which was developed by Solomon Shachna, the father-in-law of Isserles. But it is not the means which are significant. What is significant is the habit of study which the Rabbis painfully acquired and unremittingly communicated to their pupils—the *pilpul* way of worrying through a problem and leaving no end of it untied. When we are told that Jacob Henle (1809-85), the German anatomist, "wrote the first histological handbook based entirely upon cytology, and undoubtedly the most original since the days of Bichat" (1771-1802); when we read in his handbook that "explaining a physiological law means tracing its necessity from physical and chemical natural laws. It is true, even these laws offer no explanation as to the ultimate grounds, but they make it possible to combine a mass of details under one point of

view"; when we are told that Robert Remak (1815-65), of Posen, "drew a comparison between the embryonic development in the egg of a frog and in that of a bird : it was he who invented the terms 'holoblastic' and 'meroblastic' which are still used for these two types of egg";* we recognize the descent of these Jewish seekers from the Talmudists of the seventeenth century and their ascent to the greater Jewish doctors : Ehrlich, Freud, Einstein. Above the sing-song of disputation and the rustle of dry leaves in Talmudic schools, we hear the increasing preparation of scholars who will not be turned away from the portals of humane learning either by conscience-clause or by *numerus clausus*. Take only two examples from among the dead, both of them in England in the early nineteenth century. In 1832, at the age of twenty years, a boy named Arthur Lumley Davids died in London of cholera. He was the author of *A Grammar of the Turkish Language*, and the *Asiatic Journal* wrote of him in December of that year : "He soon evinced extraordinary talents, excelling in almost every branch of learning, but applying himself more particularly to the study of mechanics and experimental philosophy. From the age of fifteen he appears to have devoted his leisure

* The references to Henle and Remak will be found on pp. 397 and 399 of E. Nordenskiöld, *The History of Biology*, E.T., London, 1929.

hours exclusively to the study of Oriental languages, particularly the Turkish. . . . To the scholar, the profoundness of the author's researches, and, where they fail to satisfy him, the ingenuity of his conjectures, cannot fail to make him interesting; while for the student he is entitled to rank with the ablest pioneer." Family papers, it may be added, reveal him as a bright and merry lad, and as early as 1831 he wrote a letter to *The Times* to plead for the emancipation of the Jews. A few years later, in 1859, Numa Hartog, who died at twenty-five, was the first Jewish Senior Wrangler. He was precluded from a fellowship at Cambridge since he could not subscribe to the religious test, but his evidence before a Committee of the House of Lords contributed to the removal of that requirement by the Act of 1871.

Or let us take a longer view. It was in the tenth century of the Christian era that Gershom settled at Mayence, and laid down for generations of Ashkenazim the lines of intensive study of the Hebrew classical books. It was in the middle of the thirteenth century that cartloads of those books were publicly burnt in Paris, and that the Talmud was condemned by the papal legate. Meir of Rothenburg, a saint among Rabbis and a scholar among saints, was present at the massacre, and wrote an elegy on the event which is still recited in Jewish synagogues.

In France, Germany and Austria, his religious influence was supreme, and he headed a trek (which was intercepted) to Palestine from the Jewish streets along the Rhine and the Main. Early in the sixteenth century, as a protest against Reformation studies, there was a new demand for the destruction of Hebrew books, and Luther, not long before his death, hardened his heart against the Jews. In the middle of the next century, as we have seen, new hymns were composed by later Rabbis to commemorate fresh sufferings by the Jews, whose synagogues were burnt and whose schools were demolished. Manasseh ben Israel was born in 1604, Spinoza in 1632, and Moses Mendelssohn in 1729, but it was not till 1871 that Jews were free of the older English universities, and this freedom is still not the rule in some countries peopled with Gershom's pupils. Dr. Cunningham, in his great work on *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce*,* says that "the ingenuity of the Talmudists was devoted to the elaboration of a code of dealing by which they might continue to spoil the peoples among whom they sojourned." This is a wholly erroneous statement about the work of scholars and commentators, ranging from Gershom and Rashi in the tenth and eleventh centuries to Shachna and Isserles in the sixteenth, even if we refrain from the obvious retort

* Vol. i., 5th edition, Cambridge, 1910; p. 203 n.

that a people so ingenious and persistent proved singularly unsuccessful in its alleged aim. He says, further, that "the darker side of the Jewish character has not been entirely produced by the treatment the race has received from Christians." With this statement, thus qualified, we may concur: the causes of racial characteristics are seldom "entirely" isolable. But modern Europe, reviewing in the twentieth century the Jewish contribution to learning, in "Ashkenaz" as in "Sepharad," and recalling the conditions under which it was made, may fairly cite the experience of the last half-century in correction, not condonation, of the practice of the previous nine hundred years. Gershom rehabilitated Jewish life by the only method available in his day. He kindled a light in Exile when the light of the East was obscured, and invented self-governing institutions to replace the rule of the Gaonate. His method degenerated into *pilpul*, and out of the habit of self-government, as a national minority, which he introduced, there grew, we may submit, an excessive valuation of domestic writings, and a contraction of the prophetic dream of Zion to the terms of territorial Zionism.* But the salvage was greater than the

* See, *e.g.*, I. Zangwill, on Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) at the first Zionist Congress in Basle: "Not this the visionary figure created by the tear-dimmed yearning of the Ghetto; no second Sabbatai Zevi, master of celestial secrets, divine reincarnation, come with signs and wonders

wastage. The makers of Judaism in Ashkenaz built for the future on strong foundations; they made the best of their material according to their restricted opportunities.

§ 3. HASSIDISM.

It is due to place, not to time, to conclude this chapter of transition with a brief account of a school of thought—or was it the thought of a school?—in which Polish Jews sought refuge and consolation for their ordeal.

We go back to general history for a moment. The Peace of Westphalia, as we saw, concluded the Thirty Years' War in 1648. But the absolutists of Europe were not content to live at peace. There was almost continuous fighting from 1648 to 1702, when the War of the Spanish Succession was waged till 1713. This was closed by the Peace of Utrecht, which provided, among other terms, for the recognition of two new kings in regal Europe: Frederick William of Prussia and Victor Amadeus of Sicily. Later, the same

to lead back Israel to the Promised Land. . . . Palestine, indeed, but an after-thought: an aspiration of unsuspected strength, to be utilized—like all human forces—by the maker of history. States are the expression of souls; in any land the Jewish soul could express itself in characteristic institutions. . . . Yet since there is this longing for Palestine, let us make capital of it—capital that will return its safe percentage.”—*Dreamers of the Ghetto*, London, 1898; p. 395.

Prussian house became emperors in Germany, and the same Savoy house became kings of Italy. But the Peace did not estop warfare. True, the European wars which disputed the Peace of Utrecht, and which lasted roughly from 1715 to 1815, were not fully decided in Europe. The long, dreary conflict between rival dynasties and kings, the War of the Polish Succession following the War of the Spanish Succession, were, from one point of view, the sequel to the old religious wars, but from another, they were the tail-end of a bigger conflict, the front of which lay across the seas. This was the struggle between France and England for mastery in Asia and for the trade of the New World. There is a famous passage in Macaulay which tells us that Frederick the Great's aggression was "felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown; and, in order that he might rob a neighbour whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America." The ground of discord, we are reminded,* was not always equally apparent even to the belligerents themselves, and still less to the rest of the world: least of all, we may add, to the Jewish victims of the opposing armies. For the European Wars, however obscure, became means to ends of their own. They became original, not secondary,

* By Sir John Seeley, among others.

movements; and the possessor of the biggest army took his chance of playing the biggest rôle. "For that end," Macaulay continues, "it was necessary that Prussia should be all sting." Prussia used the far-off issues to advance her near ambition. With little or no interest in Greater Europe as such, she stung her rivals on the Continent into fearing her military might; stung the Empire in Silesia, stung France on her frontiers, stung Poland to death.* And this sting, unsealing Utrecht and leading to the Seven Years' War, entered the heart of Polish Jewry. Macaulay might have added the ghettoes of Ashkenaz to Coromandel and the Great Lakes.

We have to deal with an epoch of defeatism, caused by events wholly outside Jewish control. In our own experience we have been acquainted with aspects of post-war demoralization, but it is difficult to multiply that experience, felt in a victorious and virile nation, by the factors which

* "Henceforward [after the Treaty of Vienna, 1735] Poland enters upon the first stage of the period of the Partition Treaties. Owing to the decline of Sweden, the rise of Russia and Prussia, and the alliance between the Courts of St. Petersburg and Vienna, the fall of Poland becomes merely a question of time. . . . With the close of the seventeenth century far-sighted Austrian ministers had seen in the rising Brandenburg Electorate the rival of the Hapsburg State. The Polish Succession War, while justifying their apprehensions, forms a definite epoch in the history of that rivalry."—*Periods of European History: VI. The Balance of Power*, by A. Hassall, London, 1908; pp. 106-107.

contributed to the decline of Polish Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Their national status had always been precarious. Their life, as we saw, was never a synthesis of essential interests; and when it was broken by the massacre of at least a hundred thousand victims, by the flight of survivors across the frontier, by the raised price and lower efficacy of royal protection, by the loss of constitutional rights and the lack of man-power for their schools, above all, by an inherited reluctance to open the shutters of those schools to the light of secular learning, depression and despair were inevitable. In our own experience, again, though the requirements of post-war finance fell very heavily even on the victors, there was a limit beyond which income-tax and death-duties could not be stretched. The Jew-tax in Poland after her wars was limited by no moral and economic considerations. Reconstruction was not the concern of the tax-collectors: there was no use for the Jew who had paid. The consequent sense of irrecoverable impoverishment went a long way—perhaps all the way—to produce the typical *Schnorrer* of the ghetto, so brilliantly delineated by Mr. Zangwill. But it brought worse consequences beside. Defeatism invites attack, and we note at this period in Poland not merely an increased activity in the forcible conversion of Jews, but also an increase in aspersions on Judaism, directed to making

abominable the foul thing to be squeezed and thrown aside. Charges of ritual murder—the blood-libel, as it came to be called—served a twofold purpose: they incensed the populace against the Jews and made persecution commendable, and they provided fresh pretexts for exacting monetary penalties. It is to be observed, to the lasting splendour of the Papacy, that, when the Jews brought their wrongs to Rome, employing Jacob Selek as their envoy, they obtained plenary redress. The successive Popes were Benedict XIV. (1740-58), Clement XIII. (1758-69), and Clement XIV. (1769-74), and it is the last who, as Cardinal Ganganelli, was chiefly responsible for a verdict for the plaintiffs. The judgment may be stated in the words of the *Jewish Encyclopedia* (*s.v.* Clement XIV.), which is not likely to favour the side of Rome. We read that the report, which bore on its title-page the motto “Non solis accusatoribus credendum,” was presented to the Council of the Inquisition on March 21, 1758, still some way from two hundred years ago. It not only rejected the evidence for the immediate charge, “but, passing in review all the principal cases of blood-accusation since the thirteenth century, demonstrated that they were all groundless.” The interested testimony of baptized Jews was declared to be worthless, and the effort of Ganganelli, we are told, “was crowned with success. Benedict XIV.,

impressed by the arguments in the memoir, declared the Jews of Yanopol innocent, and dismissed Jacob Selek with honours, recommending him to the Bishop of Warsaw, who received orders to protect the Polish Jews in future from such accusations." Unfortunately this order was not obeyed in all Christian lands in the succeeding century. A taint showed through the white-wash, and it was easier to repeat the libel than to enforce respect for the judgment. Moreover, though the honour was with the Jews, the costs fell on them too, and increased their material misery. Judicial innocence, added to conscious innocence, of crimes which they had not committed did not repair the broken fabric of Jewish life, and, at the close of this Polish chapter, we meet a revival of an old movement, which is in a sense a revivalist movement, and which turned defeat into victory.

It turned material defeat into spiritual victory. Once more, since human nature does not change despite the changes in circumstances, we may illustrate the happenings out of our own recent experience. The deeper interest in "spiritualist" manifestations, which was a feature of post-war psychology, not in England alone, and the motive of which was partly the sense of loss of tangible possessions—the longing for the vanished hand and the stilled voice—was matched among the stricken Jews of Poland by a cult of pietism,

or "chassidism." To be *chassid*, or pious, became the be-all and end-all of life, among men who could no longer aspire to a part in worldly ambition. The founder of this retreat—not physical, but moral and intellectual—was Israel Baal Shem Tob (known as Besht after the italicized letters), the last three words of whose name are Hebrew for Master of the good name (of God). The title of Baal-Shem was accorded to physicians of the soul. Besht lived from 1700 to 1760, and was succeeded by Rabbi Baer, 1710-72, and the movement, which is not a sect, is still alive. It lies outside our purpose to describe it, except in its close connection with the fate of Polish Jews, whom it saved, by a miracle of religion, the power of which it is impossible to deny, and the proof of which is here to be sought in Judaism, from an overwhelming accumulation of mortal woe. It is surely a contribution to thought, and a fact of history not demonstrated elsewhere with equal vividness and conviction, that religious feeling, cultivated intensively from generation to generation, can save a people from human engines of destruction. The Polish Chassidists were pietists and mystics; they yearned exclusively for Palestine, and fell into all kinds of categories of unpracticalness. But they redeemed their followers from the effects of the terror inflicted by the Cossacks; they repaired the cumulative loss of communal in-

stitutions, Royal protection, popular toleration, academic activity, material prosperity; and they saved Judaism alive for the scholars and the merchants of Ashkenaz. They preached joy, and the nearness of God, and humility, and the efficacy of prayer. "The vulgar think," said Besht of the Messiah, "that loud, external events will herald his coming, but in truth the change will be within." Thus the voice of the lowest might be clearer than that of the highest, and the first Chassid, like Jesus himself, sought and found God in the common ways. It was a wholesome reaction from the method of *pilpul*, with its dialectic divorced from reality, and therefore indifferent to ethic, and it was as necessary in time as it was cleansing in effect. The Chassidists wore the cloak of the Cabalists, with its lining turned outwards to the sun, and it is pleasant to quit the valley of Ashkenaz in this simple company of saints.*

* See particularly *Leaders of Hassidism*, by S. A. Horodezky, with a Foreword by Dr. M. Gaster; London, "Hasefer" Agency for Literature, Bury Street, 1928; and see p. 268, above.

CHAPTER IX

SPINOZA

A NOTABLE book was published in the second year of the Great War. Dedicated to His Majesty the King by its compiler, the Poet Laureate, it was called *The Spirit of Man*, and the special purpose which it served was to prove, by selected extracts from the writings of philosophers and poets, that spirituality is the basis and foundation of human life. "To put it briefly," said Dr. Bridges in his preface, "man is a spiritual being, and the proper work of his mind is to interpret the world according to his higher nature, and to conquer the material aspects of the world so as to bring them into subjection to the spirit."

We assemble the circumstances of this book—war-time, the King, the Poet Laureate, and a lofty spiritual aim—in order to emphasize the significance of the first piece chosen by the editor. Dr. Bridges selected it from an unfinished essay, *On the Improvement of the Understanding*, written in Latin by a Dutch Jew of Portuguese descent, and published under his initials, B. D. S. (Baruch, or Benedictus,* de Spinoza), among his post-

* *Baruch* (Hebr.) =blessed =*Benedictus* (Lat.)

humorous works in 1677. That the excerpt was worthy of the theme, the Poet Laureate's taste is sufficient warrant. It relates how Spinoza "at length determined" to renounce his assured possessions for the sake of what was yet uncertain—at length, because at first such renunciation seemed to him "ill-advised": he had hoped to attain the new way without changing his usual way of life. But this hope proved fallacious. Though he "could not at once lay aside all greed and lust and honour," by which "the mind is so distracted that it can scarcely think of any other good," yet gradually he cultivated that habit. The reward was great. For "love directed towards the eternal and infinite feeds the mind with pure joy, and is free from all sadness; . . . and though at first these intervals were rare and lasted but a short while, yet afterwards the true good became more and more evident to me, and these intervals more frequent and of longer duration."

There are contemporary witnesses to the fact that Spinoza lived up to his professions. "It is scarce credible," wrote Colerus, who was Minister of the Lutheran Church at the Hague, and lived in rooms which Spinoza had occupied, "how sober and frugal he was all the time. Not that he was reduced to so great a poverty as not to be able to spend more, if he had been willing. . . . But he was naturally very sober,

and could be satisfied with little. What I say about his sobriety and good husbandry may be proved by several small reckonings, which have been found among his papers after his death. It appears by them that he lived a whole day upon a Milk-soop done with butter, which amounted to threepence, and upon a pot of Beer of three halfpence. Another day he ate nothing but Gruel done with raisins and butter, and that dish cost him fourpence halfpenny. There are but two half pints of wine at most for one month to be found among these reckonings, and though he was often invited to eat with his friends, he chose rather to live upon what he had at home, though it were never so little, than to sit down at a good table at the expense of another man." We see here that habit in the making: the "intervals" of spiritual satisfaction grew "more frequent and of longer duration." We see, too, by the same token, how they gradually became filled with the proper work of a man's mind: "to conquer the material aspects of the world so as to bring them into subjection to the spirit." For "if he was frugal in his way of living, his conversation was also very sweet and easy. He knew admirably well how to be master of his passions: he was never seen very melancholy or very merry. He had the command of his anger, and if at any time he was uneasy in his mind, it did not appear outwardly." He was besides very considerate

to others; he would "put the children in mind of going often to Church, and taught them to be obedient and dutiful to their Parents"; and this clergyman, whom we are quoting, and who honestly regarded Spinoza's work as destructive to Christian doctrine, was generous enough to add the following anecdote to his biography. "It happened one day that his landlady asked him (Spinoza) whether he believed that she could be saved in the Religion she professed. He answered: 'Your Religion is a good one; you need not look for another, nor doubt that you may be saved in it, provided, whilst you apply yourself to Piety, you live at the same time a peaceable and quiet life.' "*

Thus, the summons of Spinoza to lead the philosophers and poets in the demonstration that man is a spiritual being, is justified both by the way of life which he professed and by his practice in that way. His evidence, and the evidences to his evidence, are alike noble and inspiring; we recognize the propriety of his selection as a prime searcher for "the spirit of man." But we must not recognize it imperfectly. The present para-

* *The Life of Benedict de Spinoza*, by John Colerus, E.T., 1706, is published as an Appendix to *Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy*, by Sir Frederick Pollock, Bt. (ed. pr. 1881; 3rd edition, 1912), and extracts from it are given in *The Oldest Biography of Spinoza*, edited, etc., by Professor A. Wolf, London, 1927, and in *Spinoza*, by Dr. Leon Roth ("Leaders of Philosophy"), London, 1929. I am much indebted to these authorities in the present chapter.

graph happens to be written on a day in 1929 when the newspapers record a hitch in the vote of the Berlin City Council to present Professor Albert Einstein with the gift of a free house and grounds: "The Nationalists," we read, "gave no reason for their opposition, but it was reported that anti-Semites among them objected on the ground that Einstein is a Jew." Rather more than two hundred and fifty years before, Spinoza, another Jew, who had likewise contributed to the advance of knowledge, was reassuring his Christian landlady that her religion would save her, provided that, while she applied herself to piety, she lived a peaceable and quiet life. The rebuke from a Jew in the seventeenth century does not move anti-Semites in the twentieth; but, so far as Spinoza's contribution was a Jewish contribution to thought, and not merely the contribution of a Jew, it is proper to emphasize this aspect in considering his philosophic rank.

How far, then, was it a Jewish contribution? We may neglect in this context the formal and technical fact that Spinoza was expelled from and quitted the synagogue of his fathers. Jewish apologists explain that the cause of the sentence of excommunication was political rather than religious, and that the insecure community of Portuguese Jews immigrant into Amsterdam might have forfeited their foothold if they had not cast Spinoza out: "At a scientific treatment

of the Bible as sacred literature even Dutch toleration must draw the line"*—especially the toleration of Dutchmen on promotion; and Christian critics have never taken the ban as equivalent to Spinoza's Christianization. On the contrary, the *discredit* of Judaism, or, at least, of Jewish origin, has always been attached to him. Thus, the Lutheran pastor at the Hague, from whose friendly testimony we have quoted, started his biography with the words: "Spinoza, that Philosopher, whose name makes so great noise in the world, was originally a Jew," and he lost no opportunity of citing contemporary evidence to the un-Christian character of his work. We may set out from this source a few relevant opinions on the "Theologico-Political Treatise" (*Traëtatus Theologico-Politicus*) of 1670, whether by Colerus himself or by others with whom he concurs:

"That wicked book does altogether overthrow the Christian Religion, by depriving the Sacred Writings of the Authority, on which it is solely grounded and established."

"Every Christian, nay, every man of sense, ought to abhor such a book."

"Instead of solid reasons, it contains mere suppositions, . . . which being denied and rejected, the remaining part of his Treatise will be found to contain nothing but Lies and Blasphemies."

* I. Zangwill, "The Maker of Lenses," in *Dreamers of the Ghetto*, London, 1898; p. 171.

And, more generally:

“What David says of ungodly men, Ps. xiv. 1, does likewise suit him: The Fool has said in his heart, there is no God. This is the true opinion of Spinoza, whatever he might say.”

“Is it not the most pernicious Atheism that ever was seen in the world?”

“I don’t design to examine here all the impious and absurd Doctrines of Spinoza; I have mentioned some of the most important only to inspire the Christian reader with the aversion and horror he ought to have for such pernicious Opinions.”

And even Spinoza’s barber, who “brought in, after his death, a Bill expressed in these words: ‘Mr. Spinoza, of Blessed Memory,’” and others, including “the mercer, who furnished the mourning gloves,” who “made him the same compliment in their Bills,” are warned genially by Colerus that, “if they had known what were the principles of Spinoza in point of Religion, ’tis likely that they would not have made use of the word ‘Blessed.’” This was written in 1693. We may skip the experience of Coleridge, when, about 1798, “a titled Dogberry of our neighbourhood” caused a spy to be “sent down from the Government *pour surveillance* of myself and friend [Wordsworth]. . . . He had repeatedly hid himself, he said, for hours together behind a bank at the seaside (our favourite seat), and over-

heard our conversation. At first he fancied that we were aware of our danger; for he often heard me speak of one *Spy Nozy*, which he was inclined to interpret of himself; but he was speedily convinced that it was the name of a man who had made a book and lived long ago.”* The Spinozists survived this suspicion. But when we come, after another hundred years, to a later epoch of revolution, the discredit of Judaism is still cited: “The thoughts of the Jew Spinoza,” we read in the *Quarterly Review*, “produced the most abundant fruits. . . . In Russia, Christian blood is being spilt in abundance, and the followers of Trotsky are carrying to unforeseen, but not illogical, conclusions the principles of the Jewish revolutionary writers—Spinoza, Heine, Herzen, Marx, and Lassalle.”†

Thus, in the harvest and aftermath of war, the extremes of criticism met. The Poet Laureate exalted Spinoza to the height of a philosophic argument to the spiritual being of man; the leading review degraded him to the level of a revolutionary writer, with a natural taste for Christian blood. It was Colerus again, without his kindness, and without his knowledge of the man. Spinoza was here deemed the author, not only of blasphemies and lies, which every Christian should abhor, but even of acts of

* *Biographia Literaria*, ch. x.

† *Q. R.*, Jan., 1920. See footnote to p. 300, above.

violence, fostered by and directed to religious odium. The actual charge is refuted by Spinoza's character; but if it be true, even in the least degree, that what a type of Christian civilization fears or hates in the writings of Spinoza is derived from his Judaism, and is to be associated with the expression by other Jews of principles natively Jewish; if there be a Jewish line of thought recognizably hostile to certain Christian interests; then it is *pari passu* true that what is added to the progress of thought by the writings of Spinoza is partly a natively Jewish note, derived from and to be associated with principles common to Jews. For the difference is in the readers, not in Spinoza. Some read his theologico-political treatise with their eyes skinned for blasphemy and subversion: some read it with an eager hope of constructive social redintegration. But the writer is the same, and if it was the Jew in Spinoza who pulled down, it was the Jew who built up. He cannot be a Jew to anti-revolutionaries, and not a Jew to seekers of spiritual light.

Spinoza must plead guilty to the revolutionary. It is only a name, after all, and it is a name for good as well as evil, according to conditions of place and time. There is a class of thinkers, as we observed in Chapter IV., who regard the Reformation of the sixteenth century as a mighty process which destroyed the common culture of Europe. If so, the revolutionary in Spinoza was

also a destroyer, and his contribution to Christian civilization was a contribution to ruin. But counter-revolutionaries in this class have always failed to make their views prevail. They did not estop the conversation of Coleridge and Wordsworth about "Spy Nozy," though, as Sir Frederick Pollock says, "at that time whoever was not a Tory was held little better than a Jacobin." They did not deter Shelley from his career as poet, nor prevent him from discussing with Byron a life of Spinoza and a translation of the *Traſtatus*. George Eliot actually translated it; and Matthew Arnold, who knew about revolutions, and how an epoch of expansion will follow an epoch of concentration, wrote of it, more than sixty years ago, that, "by the whole scope and drift of its argument, by the spirit in which the subject is throughout treated, his work is undeniably most interesting and stimulating to the general culture of Europe." The culture of Europe has been the handiwork of revolutionaries, and, as there were reformers before the Reformation, so there have been reformers since; and among these Spinoza has his seat.

We may say that, in Europe, in the seventeenth century, and in the sphere of the spirit of man, revolution was necessary and good. It brought a stage further towards completion—completeness is still not attained—the underlying aim of the workers—the fighting workers—in the previous

century. And the new stage reached in that movement drew motive power from Hebrew sources. True of the Reformation itself, this proposition is even truer and more conspicuous in relation to the later epoch of thought. For the first Lutheran campaign, unlike the flood of British freedom, perished, or, at least was confused, in bogs and sands of speculation. "Religion in that theological age"—we rely on unimpeachable authority—"consisted largely in belief and very slightly in conduct, and the conversion of a movement for practical reform into a war of creeds was inevitable."* And again, on the same authority: "The sixteenth century is great in religion rather than philosophy, and stands in remarkable contrast to its immediate successor, which is great in philosophy rather than religion ;" and, after enumerating the names of Spinoza and his contemporaries, the historian proceeds: "But without the earlier century the later would have been without its problems and therefore without its thinkers. The pre-eminence of the one in religion involved the pre-eminence of the other in thought; for what exercises the spirit tends to emancipate speculation, and raises issues that reason must discuss and resolve before it can be at peace with itself and the world."† In these passages we have exactly the contribution

* *Cambridge Modern History*, ii., 162 (Prof. A. F. Pollard).

† *Ibid.*, 691 (Dr. A. M. Fairbairn).

of Spinoza, and in that exercise of the spirit, and the release of its wings from theological speculation, we have exactly the quality discerned by Dr. Bridges in his first specimen of *The Spirit of Man* : " After experience had taught me that the common occurrences of ordinary life are vain and futile, and I saw that all the objects of my desire and fear were in themselves nothing good or bad, save in so far as the mind was affected by them; I at length determined to search out whether there were not something truly good and communicable to man, by which the spirit might be affected to the exclusion of all other things: yea, whether there were anything, through the discovery and acquisition of which I might enjoy continuous and perfect gladness for ever." But to acquire this kind of knowledge the revolutionary writer must proceed by the Lutheran method, in the sense in which Luther subscribed himself *Eleutherios*, liberator. He must boldly separate himself from those whose " belief in the Bible is a formal assent rather than a living faith," and who make this attitude more apparent " by their laying down beforehand, as a foundation for the study and true interpretation of Scripture, the principle that it is in every passage true and divine." We take those sentences from Spinoza's preface to his theologico-political treatise, and, noting his aim at the acquisition of a living faith, we may associate it with the remark of the modern

historian of biology: "To acquire knowledge of the substance is the highest aim of man; it cannot, however, be attained by way of thought, but only by direct introspection. Spinoza thus ends in mysticism—that, too, probably by his Hebraic-Oriental origin."*

Further, if we are to redeem this treatise from its evil contemporary repute, let us have the courage of our convictions. Let us accept for Spinoza the epithet of a Jewish revolutionary writer, thrown at him out of the mud in Russia, and claim it as a title of honour. We recall his revolutionary aim, his rejection of old things for new, of "all other things" for "something truly good and communicable to man"; and we may expand the mysticism of his method, due to his Hebraic-Oriental origin, into a direct inheritance from the thinkers of his creed and race. Jewish apologists properly hesitate to attribute too much to the Jew in Spinoza. Perhaps they think that it will detract from his fame. But, after all, it is a part of his fame. "His way of looking at the most general problem of all, the problem of life itself, was that of his Jewish predecessors."† His extension of the work of the Reformation, and his contribution to the change in the seventeenth century from pre-eminence in religion to pre-eminence in philo-

* Nordenskiöld, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

† *The Legacy of Israel*, p. 450.

sophy, with all its sequel in the eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries in the growing peace of reason with itself and with the world, are dominantly Hebraic. Anti-reformers and counter-revolutionaries, judging the value of the movements which they oppose by sombre records of men's weakness, not of their strength, judging France, not by Rousseau's ideals, but by the practice of the Jacobins, may seek to establish a chain of ruin and woe from Reuchlin to Karl Marx, through Luther, liberating religion, and Hegel, liberating thought. They confound political revolutionaries with philosophical libertarians; they neglect the historical lessons to be drawn from Machiavelli and the absolutists; and noting, at one end of the chain, that Reuchlin defended the Jews' books, and, at the other, that Marx was a Jew, they frame principles of anti-Semitism. But they do not read Spinoza. They take him at second- and third-hand; in the piteous revolt from civil authority without obedience to moral law; in the overthrow of old things without the construction of new; in the easy lapse from formal assent without the difficult passage to living faith. They go less than halfway to understanding the revolution at which he aimed. It was at once a philosophy and a way of life. Its twin passwords were peace and renunciation. Goethe went to Spinoza for the quiet of the hills, to which the psalmist had lifted

up his eyes. The extension of God in his works—not pantheism, but God-in-allness—was Hebraic before it was Spinozist, and before it ascended from Spinoza to Tennyson's flower in a crannied wall. The Rabbis, from Hillel downwards, had imbued their disciples with the doctrine which flowered in Spinoza, that salvation comes from doing and doing without, not from being and believing.

We return now with more confidence to the question, How far, if at all, was Spinoza's contribution to the civilization of the Christian era specifically a Jewish contribution?

The chief book published in his lifetime—indeed, one of only two—was this *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which, for reasons of prudence, bore no author's name and a false imprint, and which aroused so severe a storm. It is the mature work of a great thinker, who was to die at the early age of forty-four, and, while Spinoza himself may have been surprised at the odium which it encountered, and which pursued it, as we have seen, after his death, yet the storm and the precaution alike—all the circumstances of its publication—prove the interest which it attracted and the spread of its distribution. It was known chiefly in Germany and England, the major countries of reform. Thus, à propos this treatise, Spinoza's latest biographer tells us that “there is nothing comparable in other countries to the

influence of Spinoza on English Deism, and through it on the whole course of the development of modern rationalism." Moreover, by the same token, "it exerted an important influence in a sphere other than that of philosophy. Those portions of it which dealt with the origin and character of Biblical texts . . . took no small part in the creation of that attitude towards written authority which is one of the characteristic signs of the modern mind"; so much so, in fact, that Spinoza has been called "the real founder of modern criticism."* Now, if these claims are conceded, and if we may set them against the charge of atheism which lay so heavily on Spinoza, at the instance of Bayle and others, it is pertinent to seek for the founts from which he drew inspiration. "Modern rationalism" and "modern criticism" must have a more remote ancestry than Spinoza in Amsterdam in the seventeenth century, and his own authority recalls us to his co-religionist in the twelfth, Moses Maimonides of Cordova. There was much in common to the two, beside their Sephardic descent, their interest in physical science, and the generousness of their characters. There was their common position outside the Church, as conscious outlaws from its jurisdiction. Jewish thinkers,

* See Dr. Leon Roth, *op. cit.*, pp. 34, 201-20. The historical works of Lecky, Leslie Stephen and J. M. Robertson should also be consulted.

if we may put it in a word, were the whipping-boys of reform, very much as Jewish dealers were the whipping-boys of usury. It is a matter of general knowledge—almost too general to be quite fair to the particular conditions—that the exemption of Jews from canon law set them free to lend money at interest. Their benefit to commerce, and to the economy of Christian states, is partially obscured, though partially, and properly, cancelled, by the injury to creditors and the evils of irregular money-lending. But usury was a necessary evil. It proved so necessary to credit and to the development of the economic state that, when the Jews had been turned out, Christian usurers crept in by a back-door. The money-lenders' outlawry had the advantage that they could be used and abused at the same time. Their resources were utilized and their trade was reviled. *Mutatis mutandis*, much the same was the fate of Biblical critics. Their profession was illegal, as, to quote one instance among many, the case of Lorenzo Valla stands to prove; but their resources were necessary to the advancement of learning, and the Jews were utilized, accordingly, as a kind of secret vice. So Jerome used them; so Reuchlin, though more openly; and so they were available in the seventeenth century. Spinoza was born in 1632. In 1644 Milton was writing: "Now once again, by all concurrence of signs, and by the

general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, even to the reforming of the Reformation itself." Milton, ardent and sanguine, before his years of blindness and disillusion, asked, "What does He then but reveal Himself . . . first to His Englishmen?" But in the concurrence of signs, and among the holy and devout men, it is possible now to discern, and to give due credit to, Hebrew thought and Jewish thinkers: to the scholars, exegetes and grammarians, the mystics, Cabalists, and even the false prophets, to whom and from whom alike Reformers turned at every epoch of their labours. For in the *from* was the freedom of the *to*: "at a scientific treatment of the Bible as sacred literature even Dutch toleration must draw the line," we read of Spinoza's excommunication from the Synagogue; and the Reformation made its way beyond Luther, perforce of the engines which Luther threw aside.

"Modern rationalism" and "modern criticism": these could not flourish under canon law. But the Jews might reason with their Rabbis. Even though, like Da Costa, they fell by reason, yet they might reason still; and Maimonides in the twelfth century and Spinoza in the seventeenth employed this dangerous freedom. We may place the evidences in juxtaposition, remembering the

influence of either thinker on the generation which burnt or banned his books. Take, for instance, the following excerpts—on the left, from the Introduction by Maimonides to his *Guide for the Perplexed*; on the right, from the Preface by Spinoza to his theologico-political treatise :

Maimonides (1135-1204).

“The object of this Treatise is to enlighten a religious man who has been trained to believe in the truth of our holy Law, who conscientiously fulfils his moral and religious duties, and at the same time has been successful in his philosophical studies. Human reason has attracted him to abide within its sphere, and he finds it difficult to accept as correct the teaching based on the literal interpretation of the Law. . . . Hence he is lost in perplexity and anxiety.”

Spinoza (1632-1677).

“As I pondered over the facts that the light of reason is not only despised, but by many execrated as a source of impiety, that human commentaries are accepted as divine records, and that credulity is extolled as faith, . . . I determined to examine the Bible afresh in a careful, impartial and unfettered spirit, making no assumption concerning it, and attributing to it no doctrines which I do not find clearly therein set down.”

Take a further passage from each writer. Maimonides is at pains to declare that his treatise is not addressed “to the unlettered or to mere tyros, a previous knowledge of Logic and Natural Philosophy being indispensable. Do not read superficially,” he begged them, “lest you do me an injury and derive no benefit for yourself. . . . Those whose minds are confused with false

notions and perverse methods, who regard their misleading studies as sciences, and imagine themselves philosophers, though they have no knowledge that could truly be termed science, will object to many chapters, and will find in them many insuperable difficulties, because they do not understand their meaning, and because I expose therein the absurdity of their perverse notions, which constitute their riches and peculiar treasure, 'stored up for their ruin.'” Similarly, Spinoza addressed himself to the “philosophical reader. To the rest of mankind,” he wrote, “I care not to commend my Treatise, for I cannot expect that it contains anything to please them: I know how deeply rooted are the prejudices embraced under the name of religion. . . . Therefore, the multitude, and those of like passions with the multitude, I ask not to read my book; nay, I would rather that they should utterly neglect it than that they should misinterpret it after their wont.”

There are five hundred years between these Prefaces. There is the difference between the South and the North, between the florid Arabic of the Spaniard and the terse Latin of the Dutchman. But, surely, across that half-millennium, with all the history that it enclosed, we can see a likeness which is more remarkable than all the differences caused by space and time. At each end is a Jewish critic of the Bible, and the very likeness of their approach to it is eloquent of their

common origin. The Jew was still the whipping-boy of reform, at the end as at the beginning of the five centuries. But he was still the guide for the perplexed, the seeker of light and reason, the master of philosophies, and the foe of superstition, and still aware that he was liable to misunderstanding by prejudice or ignorance. We may judge this likeness as we choose. To some, it will seem splendid for its evidence to the strength and permanence of the defenders of the authority of Holy Writ; to others, it will spell out the record of the slow progress of the studies to which Maimonides and Spinoza were devoted. But however we judge it, we must recognize it. Biblical criticism is of the Jews, for, of all qualified critics, they chiefly, throughout those vehement centuries, worked outside the jurisdiction of the Church.

But the *Traëtatus Theologico-Politicus* did not stop at Biblical criticism. As politics, historically, was lifted out of the cradle of theology, and brought political instead of religious wars, so the principles of government were wrapped up in theological garments. An inquiry into the conditions of civil liberty had to proceed from the conditions of ecclesiastical liberty. Hobbes, writing *Leviathan* in 1651, called it "The Matter, Form and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil," and Spinoza defined his treatise as "containing certain discussions wherein is set

forth that freedom of thought and speech not only may, without prejudice to piety and the public peace, be granted; but also may not, without danger to piety and the public peace, be withheld." One word more of comparative commentary. Milton's *Areopagitica*, to which we have referred, was "a speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing"; but its famous passage of grand eloquence—"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep . . ."—might be spoken even more appropriately of the vaster freedom of all thought, revealed, only twenty-six years later, by the sublime vision of Spinoza.

We may briefly examine the concluding chapter (xx.) of this tractate, in connection, first, with the circumstances of the age, and, secondly, with the aspirations of mankind. We may neglect in this context the nineteen chapters which go before, and which disengaged politics from religion: the theory of government from the mandate of theologians. Spinoza's method was inevitable in his times, and it is more significant to recall the kind of rulers who were alive in 1670, and the type of rule which is associated with their names. The Treaty of Westphalia, 1648, which closed the Thirty Years' War, marked an era in the history of the Church of Rome. Thenceforward the constitution of the Empire "admitted schismatics to a full share in all those civil

rights which, according to the doctrines of the early Middle Age, could be enjoyed by no one who was out of the communion of the Catholic Church.”* But this change, though obvious in retrospect, and therefore historically true, had but little contemporary validity. The foresightful and thoughtful men, who sought to frame new principles of civil government in conformity with this revised constitution, had to reckon with prejudice as well as logic. Opinion did not easily accommodate itself to the facts which historians were to perceive. The rulers at or near that date were Louis XIV. of France, Pope Innocent X., who vainly pronounced the Treaty void, Christian of Sweden, Alexis of Russia, and Frederick William of Brandenburg. None of these, however benevolent, was concerned to consolidate any principle of humane government which should conflict with the interests of his own State; and Spinoza remarked of the English people in that epoch that “they sought how to depose their monarch under the forms of law, but when he had been removed, they were utterly unable to change the form of government, and after much bloodshed only brought it about, that a new monarch should be hailed under a different name (as though it had been a mere difference of names).” This was how it struck

* Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, ch. xx. ; Jews, of course, were infidels, not schismatics.

a contemporary; and it was the avowed object of that contemporary to enable men "to change the form of government," without bloodshed indeed, but yet in accordance with what Milton called, "the concurrence of signs." To that end particularly he directed the treatise under consideration.

The stage was set, with the kings in the foreground, moving their armies to and fro, and sometimes hardly aware, as we saw above (Ch. VIII., § 3), of the repercussion of those military movements. In the background were the ghettos, ill-lit, huddle-roofed, and narrow-wayed, from which a Spinoza, a Mendelssohn, a Rothschild, was to emerge as *ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν*, king of men. For in the foreground of the ghettos was the Hebrew Bible, which every translator in his turn had fashioned into an instrument of reform. As the strength of the Bible grew, the power of the kings declined, for out of the freedom of the Bible, to which all readers were admitted, proceeded the sanction of civil liberty. Erasmus saw it as a liberating agency. His aspiration is well known: "The mysteries of Kings it may be safer to conceal, but Christ wished his mysteries to be published as openly as possible. . . . I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller

should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey." If this aspiration had been fulfilled in the sixteenth century, the Bible, which became the sword of kings, would have been the staff of peoples, as it was to "the people of the Book." "The Reformation that has been," it is written,* "is Luther's monument: perhaps the Reformation that is to be will trace itself back to Erasmus." If so, Spinoza will be counted among the makers of the Reformation that is to be.

He starts this chapter† by telling us why the power of kings must decline: "If men's minds were as easily controlled as their tongues, every King would sit safely on his throne, and government by compulsion would cease; for every subject would shape his life according to the intention of his rulers, and would esteem a thing true or false, good or evil, just or unjust, in obedience to their dictates." A notable saying in its time and place. For in the control of the minds of their subjects princes had been trained to build their strength on the political precepts of Machiavelli, the Florentine statesman who died in 1527. They were to practise deceit and dissembling; "Men are so simple, and so subject to present necessities, that he who seeks to deceive will

* *The Reformation*. . . . By Charles Beard. New Impression, London, 1927; p. 73.

† Translation by Elwes. London, 1895.

always find someone who will allow himself to be deceived" (*il Principe*, ch. xviii.); and the princes proved themselves apt pupils. When Machiavellism crossed the channel—

("Albeit the world thinks Machiavel is dead,
Yet has his soul but flown across the Alps"),

and invented the central dogma of Marlowe's stage—

"Might first made Kings, and laws were then most sure
When, like the Draco's, they were writ in blood,"—

it taxed the irony of Shakespeare to expose the hollowness of royal privilege and the right of popular resistance. His mayor in *King Richard III.* exactly expressed the subject-mind which the Machiavellian prince was to encourage. Presented with a treacherous and wrong issue, he obsequiously assured his ruler:

"I'll acquaint your duteous citizens
With all your just proceedings in this cause;"

and we ascribe it in part to the liberty of the Elizabethan theatre, that, within a generation of Shakespeare's death, the duteous citizens of London were to be careless of the safety of the throne, were not to call unjust proceedings "just," and were to think, speak, and act of their own initiative. Yet another twenty years went by, and the Machiavellian art of government was revised by light reflected from Biblical

criticism. "Government," declared Spinoza in 1670, "which attempts to control minds is accounted tyrannical, and it is considered an abuse of sovereignty, and a usurpation of the rights of subjects, to seek to prescribe what shall be accepted as true, or rejected as false, or what opinions shall actuate men in their worship of God." The basis of the contract was being shifted. Machiavelli had asked in the sixteenth century whether it was better for a prince to be loved or to be feared, and rulers wearing their hollow crowns had given effect to their counsellor's conclusion: "Since men love according to their own will, and fear according to the will of the prince, a wise prince should establish himself in that which is in his own control, and not in that of others" (*ib.*, ch. xvii.). But Spinoza, reflecting on events, was moved to declare in the next century: "The ultimate aim of government is not to rule, or restrain, by fear, nor to exact obedience, but contrariwise, to free every man from fear, that he may live in all possible security; in other words, to strengthen his natural right to exist and work without injury to himself and others. No," he went on, "the object of government is not to change men from rational beings into beasts or puppets, but to enable them to develop their minds and bodies in security, and to employ their reason unshackled; neither showing hatred, anger, or deceit, nor watched with the

eyes of jealousy and injustice. In fact, the true aim of government is liberty."

"The true aim of government is liberty." A strange saying—prophetic of the future, and founded on the Prophets of the past—in the age of Louis XIV., waging a War of Devolution against the Spanish Netherlands, and concluding secret treaties with Charles II. and the Emperor Leopold; a strange saying, when John Sobieski was battling with the Turks, and the De Witts were murdered at the Hague, and Alexis was Tsar of Russia, and William of Orange was marching to his marriage with Mary of England. Less strange, indeed, in retrospect, when we recall Milton's pamphlets and Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Pascal's *Provincial Letters*, the incorporation of the Royal Society, and Newton's mathematical discoveries, all between 1640 and 1670; and yet very strange again, as the saying of a voice out of the ghetto. Descartes, a few years older than Spinoza, settled at Stockholm in 1649, by the invitation of Queen Christina; but Spinoza, lonely and frugal, cut off from the fellowship of his kin and retired from the company of his equals, watched the ways of kings out of his study. True, he had eminent correspondents, including Oldenburg, the Secretary of the Royal Society; Louis XIV. offered him a pension, and Heidelberg offered him a chair. But he went on practising his trade. It was not from a seat among the

mighty that he enunciated lofty principles of government. They were no *ex cathedra* utterances, but the inferences of a student of the Book and of mankind. And, lastly, it was a strange saying, in the year of its utterance, 1670, to set against what Lord Acton wrote as recently as 1891: "Machiavelli is the earliest conscious and articulate exponent of certain living forces in the present world. Religion, progressive enlightenment, the perpetual vigilance of public opinion, have not reduced his empire or disputed the justice of his conception of mankind. He obtained a new lease of authority from causes that are still prevailing, and from doctrines that are apparent in politics, philosophy, and science." Had Acton forgotten Spinoza? Religion, at any rate, was called in counsel, in the very century of Machiavelli's greatest vogue, by a philosopher who was learned in Jewish teaching, and who never adopted any other faith than Judaism:

"If, in despotic statecraft" (we are quoting Spinoza's Preface to his Treatise), "the supreme and essential mystery be to hoodwink the subjects, and to mask the fear which keeps them down with the specious garb of religion, so that men may fight as bravely for slavery as for safety, yet in a free State no more mischievous expedient could be planned or attempted."

In order to establish this proposition, he had first to "point out the misconceptions which, like scars of our former bondage, still disfigure our notion of religion," and reinterpret religion to pious men: "Piety, great God ! and religion are become a tissue of ridiculous mysteries"; and so he "determined to examine the Bible afresh in a careful, unfettered and impartial spirit," not chiefly for the sake of Biblical criticism, but for the sake of showing that "the holders of sovereign power are the depositories and interpreters of religious no less than of civil ordinances, and that they alone have the right to decide what is just or unjust, pious or impious; lastly, I conclude by showing that they best retain this right and secure safety to their State by allowing every man to think what he likes, and say what he thinks." A strange doctrine, indeed, in its time and place. But "the judgment of history," it has been finely said, "is not always the judgment of philosophy. Hobbes's power of reasoning and mastery of English command and deserve an admiration which it would be difficult to exaggerate. But Spinoza's doctrine rests on a wider and more generous view of human life; it is less encumbered with fictions; it aims at a higher mark. It is the work, not of a powerful mind which has espoused the cause of a party and makes philosophy a partisan, but of a philosopher who is proud of being a free citizen."*

* Sir F. Pollock, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

We return for a moment to chapter xx. The revolutionary in thought was a very moderate revolutionary in action. France at the end of the eighteenth century and Russia at the beginning of the twentieth would find little warrant in the following paragraph:

“No one can act against the authorities without danger to the State, though his feelings and judgment may be at variance therewith; he may even speak against them, provided that he does so from rational conviction, not from fraud, anger, or hatred, and provided that he does not attempt to introduce any change on his private authority.

“For instance, supposing a man shows that a law is repugnant to sound reason, and should therefore be repealed; if he submits his opinion to the judgment of the authorities (who, alone, have the right of making and repealing laws), and meanwhile acts in nowise contrary to that law, he has deserved well of the State, and has behaved as a good citizen should; but if he accuses the authorities of injustice, and stirs up the people against them, or if he seditiously strives to abrogate the law without their consent, he is a mere agitator and rebel.”

The best government, Spinoza believed, would allow “freedom of philosophical speculation, no less than of religious belief,” and, though from such freedom “inconveniences may sometimes arise,” yet men cannot be made to “think accord-

ing to authority." The consequence would be "that men would daily be thinking one thing and saying another, to the corruption of good faith, that mainstay of government. . . . Laws directed against opinions affect the generous-minded rather than the wicked, and are adapted less for coercing criminals than for irritating the upright." Turn where we will in the history of Europe in the seventeenth century, we shall find Spinoza at once in advance of his times, in advance of the civilization of his era. Consider, for instance, what Buckle says of Spain in the reign of Philip III.: "Anything approaching to a secular or scientific spirit was, of course, impossible. Every one believed, no one inquired. Among the better classes, all were engaged in war or theology, and most were occupied with both. Whatever concerned the Church was treated not only with respect, but with timid veneration. Skill and industry worthy of a far better cause were expended in eulogizing every folly which superstition had invented." It is exaggerated, perhaps: there are historians who may be quoted on the other side; still it was written in cold blood more than two hundred years after the events. Spinoza wrote his tractate in their shadow. He was himself the offspring of Jews who had fled from that terror in Spain. Yet note with what sober science, how carefully and conscientiously withal, he examined the authority of the Bible for the *autos da fé* of Spain:

“How much better,” he wrote in conclusion, “it would be to restrain popular anger and fury, instead of passing useless laws, which can only be broken by those who love virtue and the liberal arts, thus paring down the State till it is too small to harbour men of talent. What greater misfortune for a State can be conceived than that honourable men should be sent like criminals into exile, because they hold diverse opinions which they cannot disguise? What, I say, can be more hurtful than that men who have committed no crime or wickedness should, simply because they are enlightened, be treated as enemies and put to death, and that the scaffold, the terror of evil-doers, should become the arena where the highest examples of tolerance and virtue are displayed to the people with all the marks of ignominy that authority can devise?”

“He that knows himself to be upright does not fear the death of a criminal, and shrinks from no punishment; his mind is not wrung with remorse from any disgraceful deed: he holds that death in a good cause is no punishment, but an honour, and that death for freedom is glory.

“What purpose then is served by the death of such men, what example is proclaimed? The cause for which they die is unknown to the idle and the foolish, hateful to the turbulent, loved by the upright. The only lesson we can draw from such scenes is to flatter the persecutor, or else to imitate the victim.”

We have quoted enough. It is no part of the purpose of this history to assay the value to philosophy of the posthumous works of Spinoza on metaphysics and ethics. Fashions vary in these studies, which seek the Infinite, or *En Soph*, to which they were directed by Hebrew mystics. But what does not vary, or hardly varies in intensity, is the earnestness of the seekers, employing in every epoch of their search all the knowledge and resources of their day. "Love stretched towards the eternal and infinite feeds the mind with pure joy," ran Spinoza's direction to the spirit of man, and his method and his conclusions profoundly affected German philosophers in the eighteenth century. The "romantic" movement, which Coleridge carried to England and Mme. de Staël to France, was deeply seamed with Spinozistic doctrine, and entered through that channel into the poetry of Wordsworth, in many respects the most English of our poets, and, through him, into the full stream of modern literature. But these traces and affiliations would take us too far from our proper theme, which we have sought, though inadequately, to illustrate out of the traditional Hebraism in the intention, and the specific Hebrew learning in the content, of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, written by Spinoza in the third quarter of the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER X

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

§ 1. RAVELLED THREADS.

THROUGH the eyes of Sephardic Jews in Holland Judaism began to look out on a kinder and less inhospitable world. If it were not friendly, it was curious and even receptive: it found, or did not refuse to find, a place for contributions which the Jews might make. Manasseh ben Israel (1604-1657), Rabbi at Amsterdam, struck contact, as we have seen, with the Fifth Monarchy men, consorted with Vossius and Rembrandt, corresponded with Queen Christina, and negotiated with Oliver Cromwell. Spinoza (1632-1677) increased deliberately the value for action of the contemplative life: "I have written nothing," he said, "which I do not most willingly submit to the examination and approval of my country's rulers"—a proposition, which, in its affirmative form, meant that what he had written was designed with that object in view. By several ways at once, the Jews, so rigidly excluded from responsible participation in civil affairs, were attempting more formal entry than by the pre-

carious foothold of individual supermen. A breath from the big world was beginning to stir the students' books. The moving staircase, to revert to our former metaphor, was disembarking passengers at fixed platforms, and Jews, neither hiding their Judaism nor protected as units, were discussing the idea of social status. The dissolvent forces of the seventeenth century could not fail to emancipate Judaism—to unfold its spirit, that is to say, out of the layers of *Mitzvoth*, or mindful acts elaborated for its conservation, in which it had been wrapt by the Pharisees and their successors throughout the Christian Middle Ages; and the emancipation of Judaism was preliminary to the civil emancipation of the Jews. Between 1590 and 1684, the cardinal years of Galileo and Leibniz, historians place the chief advance in the growth and content of humane learning, and, as Jews contributed to that advance, so, too, they reaped benefit from it.

We have drawn a distinction between individual Jews, who came to the fore and attained power in social or political affairs, and Jews in the mass, who remained outside society and politics. Inevitably, as knowledge grew and brought with it an increase in tolerance, the contribution of the individuals was remembered to the credit of the mass. Hence it is appropriate here to assemble the names of a few leaders who were eminent beyond the confines of the ghetto. They do not

belong to national histories. It would ill become even the Dutch to claim as a national hero the descendant of Portuguese Jews who wrote Latin books on Christian ethics in Holland. Scholarship was international in the Renaissance centuries, when all Europe went to school together, and even Erasmus, like Spinoza, was only technically a Dutchman: Professor Saintsbury somewhere shudders at the thought of Erasmus writing in Dutch. So the Jews who added to the common stock were not the worse Europeans because they enjoyed no civic rights.

Take the Abrabanel family, for example. It traced its descent from King David, and representatives of it were living in Germany in the nineteenth century. They may be living there today, for all we know. In 1863 a Rabbi, Hirsch Abrabanel, died at Lissa, in Prussia. King William I. was on the Prussian throne, and the historian-dictator mentioned on page 1 likes to play with the fancy: Suppose the king had laid a wreath on the coffin of the Rabbi! After all, the Abrabanel were more distinguished than the Hohenzollern. They had been treasurers to kings in the fourteenth century. One of them, Isaac (1437-1509), served the rulers of Portugal, Castile and Naples, and wrote commentaries on the Bible which proved of real value to Christian critics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Another, Samuel (1473-1550), Isaac's youngest

son, was great in learning, great in name, and great in wealth—"tremegisto," as a contemporary described him. He and his wife enjoyed the confidence and intimacy of princes, and their house was a meeting-place for scholars of the Christian and Jewish creeds. Another, Judah (d. 1535), Isaac's eldest son, is known in literary history as Leo Hebræus. He wrote *Dialogues of Love*, which Castiglione read and used in his *Courtier*, which were translated into French by Tyard, and which were known to Camoens and Montaigne, and he belonged to the school of ardent Platonists formed by Pico della Mirandola. There were others: poets, physicians, philanthropists, statesmen, scholars; adding up to a record of noble lives, to which the wreath of our fancy would have formed a fitting coronal. Such an act in 1863 on the part of the King of Prussia might have taught his upstart subjects a lesson in values. It might have corrected the anti-Semitism preached by Stöcker, the Court chaplain, and taught by Treitschke, the Court historian, and leading at last to the pan-Germanism of Houston Chamberlain. If it is too much to say that it could have prevented the War of 1914, at least we may suggest that the shadow-flowers of the royal wreath which was not sent would have sprung in European soil. For the Hohenzollern policy was always marked by a lack of the sense of Europe, till, as was written

in 1906,* “the war of 1870 was needed to efface completely the consequences of the Treaty of 1648.” We have to add another war today.

Among other Jewish Europeans, who stood outside the national movements in arms, in which to their ultimate gain, however little to their immediate convenience, Jews were as little fitted as permitted to take part, was Azariah dei Rossi (1513-1578), who resided chiefly at Ferrara, and whose *Light of the Eyes* on history and archæology has enjoyed continuous esteem. Mention is due, too, to the Luzzatto family: particularly to Simone (1583-1663) at Venice, who had the courage, denied to Shylock, though they lived in the same ghetto, to point out to the Venetians the economic loss entailed by their treatment of the Jews; and to Samuel David (1800-1865) at Padua, one of the most eminent Biblical scholars of his generation. David Reubeni, the mysterious adventurer of the early sixteenth century, belongs to romance rather than to learning, and his career illustrates the perils of the unrest of the Jewish population under the then conditions of Church and State in Europe. Joseph Nasi (d. 1579) was another adventurer of this period, who obtained so much influence at the Turkish Court that he was created Duke of Naxos. We need not follow the course of his diplomacy in Portugal, Holland, Italy,

* By Sir Stanley Leathes, in the *Cambridge Modern History*, iv., 603.

Poland, Turkey, and other countries; our point is that he represents the type of the Jew condemned to be a wanderer by the inhospitality of the nations, yet turning the Wandering Jew into a figure only just short of a statesman because no State was so constituted as to acclimatize and domesticate his talents. Luzzatto invited that perception, Reubeni defied it, Nasi compelled it, and a long series of students and thinkers brought increasing shame on its refusal. The inevitable surrender to it by the eighteenth century, though reluctant and partly involuntary in places, will occupy us in the following sections.

§ 2. FRANKFORT.

First, however, an attempt may be made to review Jewish history in miniature through the annals of a single city, and we select for this purpose the pleasant city of Frankfort-on-the-Main. The brief survey may help to bring together experiences scattered in many lands, and to concentrate the varied impressions.

The earliest authentic tidings of a Jewish community at Frankfort is the characteristic one of a pogrom in May, 1241. We need not renew the battle, which seems to have begun in resistance to baptism, and to have ended in baptism by blood. What is notable is (1) that the authorities, whether civic or imperial, seem to have inflicted

no penalty on the slayers, and (2) that the attraction of the Fair brought Jews back to Frankfort a few years later. They entered then on a period of comparative quiet, in the status of a taxable commodity, more or less monopolized by the Emperor: a passive business from the point of view of the tax-collector, but concealing, as we know, an active life of Talmudic study and domestic virtue, and of increasing obedience to religious law. About the middle of the fourteenth century we hear of a special levy, the "Opferpfennig," imposed additionally on the Jews by Lewis the Bavarian. This monarch was succeeded by Charles IV., who was also Roman Emperor, and who pawned his property in the Jews to the city of Frankfort, much as another man might pawn his furniture. He was wise in his generation, for shortly after this deal came the Plague and the Flagellants, of whose mischief the Emperor was well aware. They roused the victims of the Black Death, seeking a scapegoat for their sufferings, and swayed by any superstition, to an orgy of anti-Jewish hate. The madness of the fanatics loosed the passions of the mob, and it became an act of piety to spoil the accursed. July, 1349, repeated and increased the horrors of May, 1241.

An odd situation now arose out of the Emperor's pledge. The city fathers had to produce his interest out of their profits on the despoiled Jews, and the Archbishop, too, had a lien on the same

source of income. The consequence was, that Frankfort wanted Jews, much as mine-owners, stricken by flood or fire, might want to reopen their mines: there were debenture-holders on Frankfort Jews, and Frankfort Jews, had, therefore, to be kept in being. So there were dealings between the City Council and the Emperor, with the Archbishop of Mayence as an interested party, and in 1360 Frankfort was graciously licensed to lime its twigs for the Jews, or, as the contract said, "to attract Jews again, man and wife, to itself, and reach an agreement with them about the yearly rate of interest." The Jews came. What else could they do, on that moving staircase in Europe, crowded with passengers driven from France, England, and other countries? There was a cemetery in Frankfort, there was also a Fair, and the right of burial and the chance of trade were worth buying even at the heavy price demanded by princes of Church and State. All bound themselves, we are told, to lend money at interest, which Christians might borrow but might not lend. It was a precarious and an inhospitable recall to a society which, twice in a hundred years, had put them to violent destruction, and it is well to reflect for a moment on the terms of the foundation of the Jewish community of Frankfort. There was no known cause for their maltreatment. They had not poisoned the wells, nor killed children for their

rites. The Pope of Rome was to acquit them of the latter charge, and the former was untenable. True, they lent money at interest, but (1) someone had to do it; it was an economic necessity, for which the State had to make provision, and (2) by no wish of their own they had been driven from the land and out of other trades. We need not rehearse these particulars, which have occurred in previous chapters; we mention them here, however, in order to display in Frankfort the epitome of the history of the Jews, and in order, further, to show the contrast between the terms of their recall in the fourteenth century and the record of their service in the eighteenth.

Well, King Wenzel succeeded King Charles in 1378, and the son, a drunkard and a glutton, was inferior in statecraft to his father. He sought a way out of the financial troubles in which his policy involved him by a remission or repudiation of debts. Nobles, townsfolk and peasants all scrambled for advantage, and the Jews, of course, were worsted to the enrichment of the King. Wenzel was deposed in 1400, and was succeeded by Rupert (d. 1410), and by Sigismund, who lived till 1437. Bryce remarks of him that he "had done something to restore the credit of the Empire, but had not restored any of its power," and the Jews were one of his instruments of credit. He even exacted a contribution from them towards the expenses of the Council of Constance (1414),

though he did not extend to them the principle of no taxation without representation. Certainly, he protected them for his exactions, as a goose is fattened towards Michaelmas. Demoralization, or, at least, physical deterioration was unavoidable under these conditions, and the city recognized its effects by the decision, put into effect about 1460, to confine its Jews in a ghetto. Till then they had not been segregated. Harsh and dangerous though their lot had been, they had been spared the final degradation of open and confessed pariahship. They had been spared, too, the compulsion to the worst quarter of the city, with the consequent lack of air, light, and sanitation, and they had been spared the high gates, locked and watched all night, which made a Jewry a kind of lair. The plea is urged of compensatory advantages. There was "safety first," no doubt, in the sense that what is shut out is also shut in. But an adventurous, hardy and intelligent people, who had made effective contributions to the resources of the navigators and the reformers, would lead a shut-in life at extreme peril. The peril was to the mind, even more than to the body. The dubious safety of the body robbed the mind of free expatiation. Columbus was crossing the Atlantic by the help of the science of the Jews; Erasmus was crossing a Rubicon*

* See an article by the late Prof. Foster Watson (*Nineteenth Century and After*, March, 1916; since reprinted, I think),

by the help of Jewish lore, and the authors of the science and the lore were cut off from active participation. The bowed backs we have referred to before, but what about the stunted intellect, the "ghetto bend" in the soul of the Jew? Would he rejoin his fellow-men at last, with his imagination unimpaired, and his social virtue undiminished, and not carrying a lie in his right hand?

The inhibitions were to be multiplied. Johann Pfefferkorn, the black crow of the Reformation, perched himself at Frankfort in 1509, in order to foul his native nest. As many as fifteen hundred books, including many prayer-books in the German language, are said to have fallen into his clutches, whether for re-sale at famine prices to those who held them dear, or for sacrifice to the superstition of those who could not read them. The actual harm wrought by Pfefferkorn is not to be measured by the satire of the Reuchlinists and the progress of the Reformers. We should rather consider its results in the physical loss of rare possessions, in the moral loss of respect for their sacred character, and in the readiness of ignorance and prejudice to believe evil of the Jews' books, and to return evil to the Jews. He did not cease to plot against Frankfort, and the *Judenstättigkeiten*, or Jewish regulations, first promulgated

where he describes the passage from Erasmus quoted on p. 353, above, as "a literary Rubicon, The Middle Ages are on one side; the modern world is on the other."

in 1488, were drawn closer after his domiciliary visits. The term of residence was limited to three years, which meant more uncertainty of tenure. No house might be higher than three storeys, which meant more crowding and unsanitary conditions, and, throughout the sixteenth century, so rich in opportunities of human endeavour, the population of the Frankfort ghetto increased and its *morale* declined. Next came the Fettmilch insurrection. The story of Vincent Fettmilch belongs to economic history. It has to do with the closing of overland trade-routes and the opening of new routes across the sea, with the ebb and flow of commercial custom, and with long credits and short profiteering. Fettmilch, a leader in the gild, was neither worse nor better than others, according to the standards of the times, and, anyhow, he was hanged in 1616. But from 1612 to 1614 he acted up to the name which he usurped of the new Haman of the Jews, whom he used as scapegoat for the financial crisis. It was a much complicated business, for there was not enough money to go round, and claims on it came from every quarter. Private negotiations led to public meetings, public meetings led to riots, and the rioters hastened to the ghetto, where the pledges and the paper were mostly lodged. The day of pillage was August 22, 1614, and on the following day nearly fourteen hundred Jews,

men, women and children, made a rapid exodus from the city, carrying with them little but their lives. For such extra little as they carried they had to pay a heavy export tax.

They returned after Fettmilch's execution in February, 1616. It was a home-coming of sorts, and with the music of pipes and trumpet they hung the imperial arms on the three tall gates of the restored ghetto, and appointed two fast-days and a feast-day to commemorate the events. The new "privilege" omitted the time-clause, and, in gratitude for this security, the Jews did not insist on the indemnity-clauses. Reparations, then as now, were hard to enforce.

The devastation of the Thirty Years' War and the contagion of Sabbatai Zevi affected Frankfort and its ghetto neither less nor more than the rest of Germany, and we would select from the annals of the seventeenth century chiefly (1) the special burden of Frankfort Jews due to repeated fires in the narrow confines of the Judengasse, and (2) the publication in 1700 of *Entdecktes Judentum* ("Judaism Exposed"), in two quarto volumes, by Johann Andreas Eisenmenger. This was Pfefferkorn's attack over again, but more deliberately organized and with direct, though malicious, knowledge behind it. The Frankfort Jews were successful in procuring the prohibition of the book, but it was reissued at Königsberg, outside the Empire, in 1711, and its power for

evil is still not exhausted. Sir Richard Burton relied on it in 1898 in his *The Jew, the Gypsy, and El Islam*, and the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* revived its mischief in every country after the Great War. Eisenmenger's unenviable notoriety as the leading authority for scandal about the Talmud, based—so far as it has a basis—on a selection and combination of disparate particles, need not detain us here. It was over-charged even for the stomach of the eighteenth century, and its occasional vogue in later times has been due to exceptional circumstances. Before that century's close the Frankfort ghetto, destroyed by French fire, had spread into Christian quarters, and the gates were not rebuilt.

It is remarkable, though few have remarked it, with what ease the Jews adapted themselves to the departure. The story of the Rothschild family, who walked out of the ghetto of Frankfort, in which they had been locked up for three hundred years, and who founded, within a single generation, a modern dynasty of banker-noblemen, not in one country only, but in five, is a veritable romance, with deep sidelights on the character of the Jews. The latest historian of that family refers once or twice in his narrative* to an obsequiousness in the bearing of members of the first generation towards the princes and ministers

* *The Rise and The Reign of the House of Rothschild*, by Count Corti. 2 vols., E.T., London, 1928.

with whom they came in contact. But what did he expect? If you shut up forest beasts in a pen for ten or twelve generations, they will forget the freedom of the wild and come out pallid and tame, unadventurous, and even inarticulate. The Frankfort Jews had suffered this experience since the gates were erected in 1460, if not from the date of the first recorded pogrom in 1241. Each new generation had been brought up at a greater distance from the centre of affairs, in more thickly crowded lanes without open spaces, ignorant of the seaside and the countryside, familiar with a jargon neither good Hebrew nor good German, and compelled by increasing necessity to earn their living in unedifying trades. They were reduced from commerce to usury, and, when deprived of their profits by a capital levy, imposed by violence, sometimes unto death, they had to turn from usury to peddling; then, back to hoarding again, and out of their hoardings to a meaner kind of money-lending. It was a strange training-ground for merchant-bankers of the Bardi or Fugger type, and the historian is wrong who traces the Rothschild habit to a "lust for gold" and the Rothschild manner to a taste for cringing. For Europe had need of the house of Rothschild,* and during the century

* Reference may be made to an extract from a notice of *The Reign of the House of Rothschild* in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 1st November, 1928: "The decline in the Rothschild influence created a gap in the European system

succeeding the Napoleonic wars it served Europe honestly and well. We need not dwell on this service, which belongs to specialist studies. We are concerned immediately with the fact that this family, emergent from the ghetto, became financiers by compulsion and men of science by choice. Finance had been thrust upon the Jews by canon law in the Middle Ages, in which the walls had been built round them. It was thrust upon them in its most degrading form, with no loophole for escape or exhilaration. "They were obliged," *teste* Sir William Ashley,* "to make themselves the means by which the King pillaged the nation." A hateful obligation. To do the dirty work, and to lose the proceeds, and to be kicked while doing it, and kicked out when it was done. And yet they produced a house of Rothschild, intent on the peace of nations, refusing business which militated against righteousness, impeccably honourable in all their dealings, followers and leaders of their ancient

which our own generation has sought to close by the organization of the League of Nations. If Count Corti," the reviewer suggested, "had had the insight to realize that, in their Jewish way, the Rothschilds stood for that attitude of mind to which the world is now striving substantially to return, his industry would have resulted in a solid contribution to European history, instead of in an accumulation of facts which historians will have to remove from the inadequate and too often distorted setting in which he has embedded them."

* See p. 203, above.

creed, never forgetting the race from which they sprang, patrons and practitioners of art and learning, resolute to meet their clients on equal terms, self-respecting and full of respect for all good men. Surely this is a paradox of character, a surprise, even a romance, of history, which stirs a generous imagination. The rise and the reign of that house indicate to a sympathetic vision a triumph of character over circumstances—of character within over circumstances without; of the character trained by the Pharisees in the schools of Palestine and Babylonia, of Cordova, Toledo, and the Rhineland, of Cracow and the East, over the circumstances of persecution in feudal and papal Europe. We bring no indictment against history: it would be both futile and unseemly. The Jews suffered, and the Jews won through. But we may draw inferences from history; and, when we see, at the close of the history of the Jewish ghetto in Frankfort, a man step out from the fallen gates who was filled with the sense of Europe, and who filled his descendants with that sense, we may reasonably advance a claim for the Jewish contribution to our civilization. The concurrent signs, to use Milton's phrase, were manifest even in that unlikely quarter.

Nor should Ludwig Börne (Loeb Baruch, 1786-1837) be forgotten. Journalist, controversialist, and lover, he, too, like Rothschild, had

the European outlook, and he, too, was bred in the Frankfort ghetto. Treitschke, meditating pan-Germanism in a Prussia reckless of comity, denounced Börne for introducing a Jewish leaven into Teutonic culture. Again, we may leave to specialists the evaluation of this contribution. Our point is, that, valuable or the reverse, it was something unexpected in its provenance. Börne and Heine were Jews and contemporaries, and, though they quarrelled in their lifetime, they were united in service to their common country. It is not our business here to fight their battles with Metternich over again. Germany today is a republic, and Börne was republican. The honour due to his memory in this regard must be assessed by his fellow-countrymen, while Heine's primacy in lyric poetry is a matter of universal import, and, as such, is independent of his origin. We are concerned here solely with the Jewish leaven, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the demolished ghetto released gifts of which Germany stood in need. "You have taken away the air from the Jews," wrote Börne in one of his letters (*Briefe aus Paris*, 1830-33); "but they have been kept thereby from rotting. You have strown the salt of hate on their hearts; but their hearts have been kept fresh thereby. You have locked them through a long winter in a deep cellar; but it is you who are frozen in the spring. . . . Because I was born

to no fatherland, I crave one more eagerly than you. Because my ghetto-gate opened on a foreign country, now no city can contain me. Where German speech is, there is fatherland for me." Equate this with Heine's lyric cry:

"Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland . . .
Es war ein Traum"—

and we shall realize that liberalism in Germany was partly a boon from the ghettos, and was, perhaps, the more suspect on that account.

§ 3. MOSES MENDELSSOHN.

Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786), who found a fatherland in Germany, was the midwife of Jewish emancipation. Unassimilative Jews like to load him with the discredit of the apostasy of his own family, and even of the conversion to Christianity of men like Börne, Heine, and Disraeli, in the first generation of reform. But the charge cannot be sustained. The ghettos were teeming with ideas which could not come to expression without the aid of the forceps of reform, in language, ritual and manners. Talents struggling to be free and powers ripe for opportunity were demanding instant release. But the midwife is not the mother; and, if a few of the leaders were lost to Judaism, the reproach does not lie with those who accelerated the birth of liberty and reform: it lies with those who resisted the move-

ment, and made the way of the pioneers too hard.

It is still timely to prove this proposition, for it goes to the root of the Jewish problem as it is formulated today. Though born two hundred years ago, Mendelssohn lives in a controversy yet unsettled. The Luther of Jewish reform, and the Socrates of Jewish philosophy, he stands as the type of modern Jews, and their problem was his. "He dissolved the old synthesis into its component parts, and separated the man from the Jew. In our activities as men," says a Jewish writer,* "we share the life of Germans, French, or English, as the case may be, and only in our relation to God are we Jews. This was the new teaching which Mendelssohn exemplified." His example took two main directions. First, he translated the Pentateuch into German, thus seeking to terminate the long reign of the Judæo-German vernacular. Secondly, like a Rothschild of letters, he dealt with the princes of his own craft. Perhaps it was more dealing than originating: dealing with the tokens of criticism, rather than inventing new principles. It is not our function to adjudicate. But we may note, how, in art particularly, the Jewish contribution is more considerable in criticism, collection and ordination than in creative work; and, though

* Mr. M. H. Segal, in *Aspects of the Hebrew Genius*, London, 1910; p. 183.

this is less true about music, in which execution is also creation, the observation holds good of Mendelssohn's writings. "His actual critical work," we are assured by the historian of criticism,* "leaves us, if not in the depths of the wilderness, at any rate at some distance from the Promised Land"; and, though Braitmaier, a German authority, takes a more cheerful view, and allots about two-thirds of a volume on *Poetische Theorie und Kritik* to the man who "laid the foundation for all this," we shall probably be right in following Saintsbury. But the exact evaluation of Mendelssohn's work in the development of literary taste is not relevant to our present argument. The point is, that this deformed son of humble parents—he said in jest that Maimonides had given him his hump—who peddled his way in 1743 from Dessau to Berlin, did march in the company of those who were to enter the Promised Land. He was Lessing's friend and collaborator; the equal colleague of Abbt, Nicolai, and the rest, who were bringing back German culture from the desert of the Thirty Years' War. Through his own writings on æsthetics, and through his brilliant daughter, Dorothea, who married Friedrich

* Prof. G. Saintsbury, *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe*, Edinburgh, 1904; vol. iii., p. 32. May I add here that my mother's *Jewish Portraits* (by Lady Magnus, Memorial Edition, London, 1925) contains an admirably sympathetic sketch of Mendelssohn?

Schlegel (1772-1829), the contemporary of Wordsworth and Coleridge, he was a true father of the Romantic Movement. The Mendelssohn *salon* in Berlin became a centre of the new light, which shone in the Schlegels' *Athenæum* of 1798, the year of *Lyrical Ballads*, and pervaded the passage to the nineteenth century. Mendelssohn is inseparable from these happenings in Germany, France, and England, and he proved, while ghettos were still in being, that the ghetto-mind was erect, though the ghetto-body was bowed, and that its seeds could ripen only on the soil of Europe. Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744-1816) and Moses Mendelssohn were contemporaries. Each came out of a ghetto, in which his family had been immured for several centuries, and each brought gifts of value to Christian Europe. They dealt in different commodities, but their genius was one. Like Meredith's lover, each might have exclaimed, "Heaven is my need!"—a new heaven and a new earth, ample enough for the repressed longings of a thousand years' exclusion from God and man.

Yes, from God as well as man, though this brings us to the heart of the controversy, and near the end of our present task.

Let us note, at the outset of the inquiry, that the Mendelssohnian philosophy of Judaism, though newly presented, was not new. The idea of Jewish emancipation, as at once a recognition of,

and an opening for, the Jewish contribution to civilization, dates from the seventeenth rather than the eighteenth century. We have marked it in Bacon's *New Atlantis*, in Spinoza's *Tra&latius Theologico-Politicus*, in Manasseh ben Israel's mission to Cromwell. But, actually, the idea is much older; as vision and speculation, it has no fixable beginning, and is an unalienable heritage of Israel. Even its pragmatic value in society and politics was earlier than Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn adopted it, moulded it, and formulated it, but opinion was ready for it before him, and he pushed at a half-open door. Take, for example, the record of John Toland (1670-1722), an English deist of Irish descent, who preceded Mendelssohn by two generations, and who committed, according to Sir Leslie Stephen, "the first act of the war between deists and orthodox." This was the publication in 1696 of his *Christianity not Mysteriorious* (we may recall the challenge of Erasmus: "The mysteries of Kings it may be safer to conceal, but Christ wished his mysteries to be published as openly as possible"), for which he was persecuted at intervals throughout his life. He edited the prose-works of Milton and the *Oceana* of Harrington, both symptomatic of his tastes; he was admitted to the philosophical conversations of Queen Sophie Charlotte of Prussia, and his letters to her, under the name of Serena, were translated into French by Holbach,

member of the Diderot circle. Stillingfleet coupled him with Locke as a Socinian heretic, and he corresponded with Leibniz and other big men of the time. Such is the record of the writer whose *Origines Judaicæ*, 1709, and *Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland*, . . . containing also a *Defence of the Jews against all vulgar Prejudices in all Countries*, 1714, anticipated by more than half a century the emancipatory labours of Moses Mendelssohn. Toland's pamphlet, we are assured, except for the date on its title-page, might easily be taken as a document of the nineteenth century, so tolerant was its tone and so reasonable its argument;* and the preparation for Mendelssohn should include the statement by a Christian divine of the twentieth century that, "except in her conception of religion, Israel has no greater gift to offer the world than this, a truly democratic theory of the relation between the government and the governed. To understand the unique importance of Israel in history," he adds—and such understanding is the object of our essay—"it is necessary to remember not only her geographical position between the two great empires of the ancient world, but also her gift to man's political thinking."† It was this "gift" which Mendelssohn articulated and devised.

* See Dubnow, *op. cit.*, viii. ; 520 ff.

† The Rev. Prof. Theodore H. Robinson, D.D., in his Schweich lecture to the British Academy, 1926 ; included in *Palestine in General History*, London and Oxford, 1929.

How was he to do it? He seems to have perceived that the persuasion of the Christian world, or of the small part of it which counted in his estimation, was a less formidable matter than to win the consent of his fellow-Jews. For the social world which Mendelssohn wooed—and won—was cosmopolitan from the start. When Friedrich Schlegel, who became his son-in-law, declared that “die romantische Poesie ist eine progressive Universalpoesie,” he was enunciating an axiom of conduct as well as of criticism. Friedrich’s elder brother, August Wilhelm, was moved by a like resolve to make “a cosmopolitan centre for the human mind.” Hardly distinguishing between literature and politics, he looked forward to a time when German would be the medium of communication between the cultivated nations of mankind; and the two brothers, thus exhilarated by the dawn-wind, derived their tastes and faculties from their father, Johann Adolf Schlegel (1721-1793), who was a few years senior to Mendelssohn. “Allgemeinheit,” “Toleranz,” “Menschenliebe”—universalism, toleration, philanthropy—were shining, like stars, in the morning sky. They were the qualities in art specifically sought in an essay by Wackenroder, the intimate friend of A. W. Schlegel’s friend, Tieck, who has been called* the matador of Romanticism. An appeal

* By Haym, *Romantische Schule*, p. 64.

to those qualities at that time won an instant response from the circle of ardent youth, in which Mendelssohn, largely by merit and partly by good fortune, succeeded in making his mark. The exotic *was* the romantic. Mendelssohn bore his romance in his race. Lessing (1729-1781), his exact contemporary, was already interested in the Jews, and the development of that interest in *Nathan der Weise* turned "romantische" into "Universalpoesie." The case for the Jews in those enlightened *salons* was proved almost before it was presented, and Christian Dohm's manifesto *Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (Berlin, 1781) passed into the heritage of France in revolution and of America in independence.

The difficulty, comprehensible in the circumstances, was to persuade the Jews. These Romanticists were so plaguily romantic. Why should sensibility to moonlight and a taste for lonely woods at dusk require a devout and poring Talmudist to lift up his eyes from his scroll? We can imagine the shaking heads of the learned Rabbis, disturbed by so strange a demand. "Breaking a wild light on the graves of christened children," says Pater somewhere of Wordsworth, and the phrase may be transferred, *mutatis mutandis*, to the surprise of pious German Jews at the wild light suddenly broken by a romantic son of the ghetto on the sanctities and conventions of his home. They did not speak

the same language, these disciples of Romance and the Talmud: neither one language of the mind nor of the tongue; and the first task to which Mendelssohn set himself in his aim at converting the Jews was the translation of the Pentateuch into German. German, we have seen, was to become the medium of communication between cultivated nations. Native Jews should have their share in that lot. While disusing their Yiddish jargon, they should be admitted, through the Book which they all read, to the pleasures of diction and style which Romance-critics were now displaying. For much of it was words and sounds: "Technique, not subject-matter, is art's chief aim," declared Novalis (F. v. Hardenberg, 1772-1801), perhaps the most romantic of them all, and "they considered it their mission," says their historian,* "to find the golden words and phrases, and fit the poetic message organically to them, as nature fitted her message organically to the loveliness of the rose." How, then, should Mendelssohn do better than to romanticize the Bible, and to leave it, in its new form, to teach Jews the language of the mind through the language of the tongue? He supplied his German version with a Hebrew commentary (*Biur*), which gave rise to a generation of *biurists*, and all along the ghettos of Western Europe, and even to the

* R. M. Wernaer, *Romanticism and the Romantic School in Germany*, New York, 1910; p. 42.

Danube and across it, spread the new Enlightenment, or *Haskalah*: the humanism of modern culture—philological, shading into philosophical.

It did not end as it began. The golden words and the poetic message did not fit. We should transgress the limits of this volume if we discussed the new Jewish learning, or the so-called science of Judaism (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*), associated in the early nineteenth century with the labours of Nahman Krochmal (1785-1840) and Judah Loeb Rapoport (1790-1867), Galician scholars, and continued in Germany by Isaac Marcus Jost (1793-1860), Zachariah Frankel (1801-1875), Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891), and, above all, by Leopold Zunz (1794-1886), the master of all who know.* But this school, for which the motive came from Mendelssohn, did not solve the problem which it attacked. Perhaps, as some opponents have suggested, it confused apologetics with science, and lost its way between the two. Perhaps Jews in front were too quick in slipping the moorings, and Jews behind too tenacious in holding them. Perhaps the dynasty of Cræsus has conquered the dynasty of Solon, to use the symbols of a modern philosopher, in the Jewish

* "There is not one among the host of scholars and workers in the vast field of the history of Judaism who does not owe the best part of his knowledge and his enthusiasm for his studies to the noble, pious, and modest Leopold Zunz."—M. H. Segal, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

world, as in others. Whatever the cause, the conclusion is clear: the Jews preferred estrangement to assimilation; in the bulk, and throughout their habitations, they neither reformed their religion nor changed the mode of life which it imposed. They went some way in those directions in the West. They sailed on the stream of liberalism, into which, through straits of Revolution, Mendelssohn's romanticized Judaism was carried during the nineteenth century. But they lost Disraeli in the current, as they had lost the first romantic generation in Germany. We write of the Jews as an *active* people, as agents of their own fate. But, in fact, they were much more a passive people, and the preference which we have ascribed to them was by necessity, not by choice. *God* they would not surrender, at any period of their history. "I, the Lord, change not": Malachi iii. 6-8 held them fast. They bound their monotheism by ordinances. But, except for this heroic resolve, which determined all the rest, they were driven by forces greater than their own. What could they do against clericalism in France, or nationalism in Prussia, or superstition in Russia? What could German literary style, however perfect, avail them against those? They had given Mendelssohn a hearing, and his own children had turned aside. They had founded a school in his honour, and the Gentiles left the books unread. The ears were heavy, and

the eyes were shut. So they quoted Isaiah, ch. vi., and dug themselves into their narrow trenches. They did more. When the Hebrew leaven—the resistless leaven of Hebrew genius—was working most rapidly among the nations, and progressive Judaism, romantic by epithet and descent, was facilitating its victories, they went back across the eighteenth to the seventeenth century, from Moses Mendelssohn to Sabbatai Zevi. Relying on a repaired self-consciousness, which they derived partly from Yiddish novelists and poets, they rose against the bond of charity, relating the wealthy West to the poor East, and reinvented the national idea which, though dormant, had not died. They took shelter again behind Jerusalem, no longer extending it, like their greatest thinkers, to frontiers coterminous with the universe, nor placing their genius for politics at the free disposal of mankind, but intent on safety first in their own boundaries, as a refuge at once from the lure of assimilation and from the experience of hate. Theodor Herzl (1860-1904) is the Sabbatai Zevi of this revived Jewish nationalism. His Zionism was material Messianism, the Golden Age achievable by gold. His *Judenstaat* of 1896 was the reply, belated but effective, to Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* of 1783, and the Balfour Declaration of 1917 crowned it, through the accidents of war, with a more resounding triumph than its author anticipated.

§ 4. EPILOGUE.

We would not end on a controversial note. The physical contact with Jerusalem satisfies so real a need, and has evoked such useful activities in the Hebrew University, the afforestation and irrigation of Palestine, and sundry industrial enterprises, that few or none would unwrite that Declaration. And, anyhow, Zionism has come to stay. It was defended by the Earl of Balfour in the House of Lords on June 21, 1922, as an "adventure," and a "new experiment," which, though it might fail, was well worth attempting; and as a great imaginative act, the ideal object of which was "to wash out an ancient stain upon our own civilization." For consider, he urged, how the Jews "have been subjected to tyranny and persecution; consider whether the whole culture of Europe, the whole religious organization of Europe, has not from time to time proved itself guilty of great crimes against this race. I quite understand," he went on, "that some members of the race may have given, doubtless did give, occasion for much ill-will, and I do not know how it could be otherwise, treated as they were. But if you are going to lay stress on that, do not forget what part they have played in the intellectual, the artistic, the philosophic and scientific development of the world. I say nothing of the economic side of

their energies, for on that Christian attention has always been concentrated"; and it was as the adjustment of an ancient wrong, and, indeed, as a message of reconciliation, "a message which will tell them that Christendom is not oblivious of their faith, is not unmindful of the service they have rendered to the great religions of the world," that Lord Balfour invited the House of Lords to embark enthusiastically on the experiment, which has been set on foot and which has not failed.

But a Palestinian centre of Jewish culture has never contained, and will not contain, the contribution of Jews to the civilization of the Christian era. From the schools of Jabne downwards, through Babylonia, where the Talmud was completed, and Spain, where Maimonides was born, and where the Jews built a bridge of scholarship between the East and the West—such a bridge as may now be built in Palestine—and the Rhineland, where Rabbi Gershom and his successors weaned the Jews from their Oriental mother and accustomed them to stepmothers' law, and, Holland, where Spinoza and Manasseh ben Israel, the one by theory and the other by practice, made the gifts of Judaism accessible to the Christian world, the lines were laid for Mendelssohnian reform. Always on the eastern horizon glowed the beam of the restoration of the Jews. False Messiah succeeded false Messiah—false in his personal pretensions, but not to his heritage of

Jewish mysticism, which passed through Pico della Mirandola into the doctrine of Pietists, Quakers and other Christian sects. It flared to a conflagration in the seventeenth century, in the brief lifetime and long vogue of Sabbatai Zevi, and its flame illumined the more practical counsels of the Zionists in the nineteenth century. It was a recurring counter-Reformation, a reiterated call to Jerusalem as the political city of Jehovah, whose symbol of rule had been carried in Vespasian's triumph to Rome. But time has been on the side of Vespasian. The Roman wrought better than he knew. No gesture in 1917 can unseal the record of nineteen centuries, however graciously it may atone for much hardship in the making of it. That record stands in the civilization of the Christian era. Another volume would be required to display its operation in the nineteenth century: in the constitution of states, in music, art and literature, in economic thought and industrial activity, in the laboratory and the workshop, in the theory and practice of charity, in Biblical criticism and philosophical speculation. No Messianism, Nationalism, Zionism, will shut all this up in Jerusalem, like a genie in a bottle. The physical contact has been repaired for those who sighed. The touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that was still are restored by the co-operation of a Jewish Agency in the administration of Palestine and by the recognition

of Hebrew as one of its three official languages.* Herzl, more fortunate than Zevi, has domiciled his dream, or, perhaps, more meek than Zevi, he would have said in the mood of Sir John Denham:

“Where the Muses and their train resort
Parnassus stands; if I can be to thee
A poet, thou Parnassus art to me.”

For Palestine was, “indeed, but an afterthought”† to this dreamer of the ghetto.

Meanwhile, there can be no more false Messiahs. The establishment in Palestine of a national home for Jews has foreshortened the vision into reality, and has called a permanent halt to the seers. A Messianic movement in the future would be dealt with by the Council of the League of Nations, or by its Mandates Commission, in the ordinary course of business, and pseudo-Messianism, as a force in Jewish life, is spent and done. The greater is the opportunity which is reserved for other aspects of Judaism, and for its more direct activities in contribution to the civilization of the Old World and the New. When Kant wrote to Moses Mendelssohn, à propos his essay on *Jerusalem*, “I consider this book as the herald of a great reform which will affect not only your nation but also others,” he imposed on Jews a categorical imperative. “You have succeeded,” he declared, “in combining your religion with

* See Articles 4 and 22 respectively of the Mandate for Palestine.

† I. Zangwill, *op. cit.*, p. 395.

such a degree of freedom of conscience as was never considered possible, and of which no other faith can boast. You have at the same time so clearly demonstrated the necessity of unlimited liberty of conscience in every religion, that ultimately our Church will also be led to reflect how it should remove from its midst everything that disturbs and oppresses conscience, to the final union of all men in their view of the essentials of religion." If this, in the opinion of so true a moralist, was the mission of Israel in 1783, the intervening hundred and fifty years have not reduced its obligation. On the contrary, the obligation is intensified. "The Jew was wanted so urgently" in the eighteenth century, according to the latest historian of English civilization,* "that neither laws nor regulations could keep him out," and the names occur in quick succession of Sir Solomon de Medina, the first Anglo-Jewish knight, of Sampson Gideon (1699-1762), and of Levi Barent Cohen (1740-1808), the father-in-law of Nathan Mayer Rothschild (1777-1836) and of Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885). The need grew through the nineteenth century. It was satisfied in more departments than that of finance, and in the last few decades of that century, when emancipation had become a habit, and Zion had been brought down from the clouds, progressive Judaism in all Western countries, under

* Mr. Esmé Wingfield-Stratton,

its various names of Liberal and Reform, was united to convert the new habit into the second nature of the Jews. In that union of progressive forces Mendelssohn, gentlest of controversialists, would have seen the fulfilment of his hope. It was the hope of Philo, contemporary with Jesus. The two Jews meet across the ages, beyond the ruin of inhospitable states, and pool their gifts for the increase of civilization. "Looking close into Philo," we read,* "into his aims more than his achievements, we find that he was faced by the eternal problem of Jewish life—how to share the world's wide interests and its truest culture, and yet, with all this, how to retain an unconquerable devotion to Jewish ideals." This problem and its partial solution have occupied our attention in the present volume. We leave them at the end of the eighteenth century in a more hopeful position than in the first. Philo and Mendelssohn were unifiers, not destroyers, and what the one did in Alexandria and the other in Berlin, "we can and must do," writes Dr. Abrahams, "in New York and London." The obligation lies on Christians as well as Jews. It is Christian civilization which has been enriched by the guarded treasures of Jewish thought and the retarded powers of Jewish action, and its future depends in part upon its ability to quicken these resources.

* In *Some Permanent Values in Judaism*, by I. Abrahams, New York, 1923; pp. 51, 65.

NOTES

NOTES

Note 1. Page 24.

The Sacred Silver.

THE positive *crimen* of Flaccus was that he had violated the law excepting the Jews from the prohibition to export gold from his province. The Jews enjoyed this exceptional privilege, and Cicero defended Flaccus by vilifying the Jews. Their title was indefeasible. As a privilege granted to every Jew of twenty years of age and upwards in the Roman Empire, wherever his domicile, it seems to have dated from the second century B.C. It enabled him to send an annual contribution of a didrachma, known, together with certain other taxes, as "sacred silver" (*ἱερὰ χρήματα*) to Jerusalem, for the upkeep of the Temple. As a Jewish ordinance, it was founded on Nehemiah x. 32-34 ("the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God"), replacing Exodus xxx. 12-15 ("an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Everyone from twenty years old and above shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel"). Not only the privilege, but the means of transport were regulated by Roman law, and Titus charged the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem with using the money collected under Roman protection to make war against Rome. It was therefore with particularly ironic cruelty that

Vespasian in A.D. 70 or 71 transferred the object of the didrachma from Jehovah to Jove (Jupiter Capitolinus), and transformed the "sacred silver" into a "fiscus Judaicus." Technically, this was still a religious tax, though, since the Emperor was Jupiter's vice-regent on earth, the proceeds swelled the Imperial treasury, and there was a special officer to supervise the Jewish lists ("procurator ad capitularia Judæorum") in Rome. Only circumcised and professing Jews were liable to be assessed for the tax, but even the latter reserve was abused in course of time, and we read in medical writings, as well as in the satirists, of an operation known as *epispasm*, by which renegade Jews sought to conceal circumcision, or the owners of circumcised slaves sought to evade liability to the tax. Suetonius reveals as a reminiscence of his childhood the public examination of an old man of ninety, "an circumsectus esset." These abuses were stopped by the Emperor Nerva, one of whose coins bore the inscription, "Fisci Judaici calumnia sublata," and the removal of the abuses lightened the burden of the tax.

Note 2. Page 63.

Race, Language, Nation.

The statement in the text is substantially correct, and students may accept it for practical purposes, despite the vast literature of scholarship and the even vaster literature of controversy which encumbers every part of it.

As to *race*, the student may rely on the considered dictum of Dr. Charles Singer (*The Legacy of Israel*, 180):

“ In a cultural sense the Jews were the first Europeans. In a racial sense—if indeed there be a Jewish race—the reader may be reminded that the Jews had settled in Western Europe before many of its most typical inhabitants had emerged from Asia and before others had crossed the Central European Plain or had traversed the North Sea to invade the West.” Dr. Singer’s note to this passage runs : “The conception of a Jewish *race*, in the biological sense, seems to be based on a misunderstanding. The word *race* is often used very loosely, but there is both anthropological and historical evidence against the existence, at the present time, of a Jewish race in the biological sense.” Mr. R. Travers Herford, in the same volume (p. 102), writes : “ It is . . . vain to assert a racial unity of Jews. As they are today, even allowing for intermarriage amongst themselves, the Jews, so far as racial origin is concerned, are as mixed a people as any in Europe or elsewhere. If there are to be found in them characteristics more or less common to all, they are not due to identity of race.” *All* is probably excessive, but the religious reformers of the first century A.D. did lay down lines for a partial identity of Jewish characteristics, which strengthened the native similarities. The biological position herein defined is assumed throughout the present volume, and is supported by F. Hertz (*Race and Civilization*, E.T., London, 1928 ; p. 135) : “ Many of the traits commonly believed to be Jewish characteristics are in reality of the most diverse derivations. . . . The Jews, unquestionably, are the product of manifold crossings. The manifold share which they took, and still take in the intellectual and moral development of the world,

is therefore a strong proof against the alleged noxiousness of racial crossings." Sir Arthur Keith, in a Boyle lecture on "Nationality and Race" (Oxford, 1919), says that, "however much the Jewish racial frontier may be strengthened by the faith which is the standard of the race, raids have been made, are now made, across that frontier, and a certain degree of hybridization has occurred."

As to *language*, the student may rely on the considered dictum of Dr. Jean Juster (*Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, i., 365-368, with full footnotes; Paris, 1914), the effect of which is, that the Jews of Palestine spoke Aramaic and Hebrew, and that, though the use of Hebrew was not prohibited to Jews in the Diaspora, it was not in vogue. "No one compelled the Jews to abandon Hebrew, and to talk Latin, or, much less, Greek" (this, in conflict with Mommsen). "The speech of the Jews of the Diaspora was as diverse as the localities which they inhabited"; and again: "Les Juifs, peut-être à cause de leur faculté de mêler à leur vie intérieure, purement juive, les formes extérieures du milieu qui les entoure, ont toujours abandonné leur langue maternelle pour ne parler que la langue du peuple qui les recevait dans son milieu." The facts may be stated without suggesting an inference as to the revival of Hebrew or the spread of Yiddish.

As to *nation*, the facts are more difficult, since it is essential to distinguish between moral and technical values. Technically, Juster (*op. cit.*, i. 19-27) is clearly correct in his demonstration (again, in conflict with Mommsen) that "la nation juive" did *not* disappear after the Judæo-Roman war of A.D. 70. "La théorie

de la nation devenue confession est violemment contredite par les faits." These facts were that the privileges continued to the Jews by Rome were continued to them as members of a nation, and not of a "culte licite," since the Jewish religion was never recognized as a "culte" to be freely adopted and fully exercised by subjects of the Empire. Its practice was limited "aux membres de la *nation* juive." Consequently, the Jewish privileges were privileges attaching by hereditary right to all Jews "ethniquement Juifs"; they belonged "à la *nation* juive, et bien loin d'être des privilèges d'un culte, ils sont ceux d'un peuple." All this is incontestably correct, but it is the statement of the *legal* status of the Jews in the Roman Empire after the destruction of the Temple, and it does not touch the question of their *moral* status. Their sacred silver was diverted from Jehovah to Jove. They were driven from Jerusalem, which was later rebuilt as a Romano-Greek city. They had no State, and no supreme ruler in Palestine, and it was merely for the convenience of their conquerors that the nominal status of a nation was preserved in order to justify the continuance of their religious privileges. Nationality was, in fact, a legal fiction, and the main object of the Pharisaic schoolmen was to save the self-respect of the Jews by substituting a religious consciousness, full enough of duties, obligations and rewards, to supply the place of the lost nationality. It is this perception of a substitutive (an *Ersatz*-) nationalism which has invented the term "nomocracy," as the epithet of the new status of the Jews in relation to their own government after A.D. 70. The Jews were as definitely nomo-

crats as St. Paul was antinomian. So Simon Dubnow clearly writes (*Weltgeschichte des juedischen Volkes*, German trans., vol. ii., § 1): "Für die des Staates beraubte Nation hat die Herrschaft oder die Zucht der autonomen Gesetzgebung dieselbe Bedeutung wie die Waffenrüstung und die militärische Zucht für den Staat, nämlich die einer Schutzwehr für ihre Unverzertheit und die Unverletzlichkeit ihres geistigen Besitzstandes," and space should be found, too, for the dictum of Prof. Schürer (*Geschichte des juedischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, i., 656; Berlin, 1901): "Der Untergang Jerusalems bedeutet nicht mehr und nicht weniger als die Auslieferung des Volkes an den Pharisäismus und die Rabbinen." Neither more nor less.

Note 3. Page 81.

The Wailing Wall.

When Hadrian had rebuilt Jerusalem as Ælia Capitolina, and no Jew was permitted, on pain of death, to set foot in the new pagan city, the tender mercies of Rome were stretched so far as to sanction a Jewish pilgrimage once a year to the site of the former Temple. The date selected fell in August on the 9th Ab, the fateful date in the Hebrew calendar of the fall of Jerusalem, 586 B.C., and A.D. 70, and of Beth-ther in 135. A valuable account of this pilgrimage is extant from the pen of St. Jerome, author of the Latin Vulgate Bible, which was deeply indebted to Jewish learning. Jerome acknowledged his "unspeakable hatred" of the Jews, but he could not keep out a pathetic note from between the lines of the following passage in his commentary on Zephaniah:

The traitorous inhabitants (the Jews) who murdered the Servants of God and particularly the Son of God, are forbidden access to Jerusalem even to this day. They are admitted thereto only for lamentation. With gold they have to purchase the indulgence to lament the destruction of their State. They who once shed the blood of Christ have now actually to pay for their tears, so that not even weeping is without price for them. On the day when Jerusalem was captured by the Romans, there can be seen the spectacle of the arrival of sorrowing folk—a stream of weak, old men and women, clad in rags, and betraying by their demeanour and even by their outward appearance the wrath of God. The miserable groups flock together, and there, where the Lord rose on the gleaming Cross, and where on the summit of the Mount of Olives is the glittering emblem of that Cross, we see *populum miserum et tamen non miserabilem*, a miserable people and yet not worthy of commiseration, weeping for the ruin of their Temple. While their eyes are yet full of tears, their hands yet trembling, and their hair distraught, the watchman demands from them the fee for permission to shed more tears.

This was written in 392. The wall was washed with Jewish tears till the twentieth century, when a Jewish national home was re-established in Palestine.

Note 4. Page 87.

'Alenu.

Lest we should seem to be suppressing evidence which weighed with the judges of Jews in the Middle Ages, we quote here the opening paragraphs of this noble prayer :

“ It is incumbent upon us (*'alenu*) to give praise to the Lord of the Universe, to glorify Him who formed creation, for He hath not made us to be like the nations of the land, nor hath He made us like the families of the earth ; He hath not set our portion with theirs, nor our lot with their multitude. For they prostrate themselves before vanity and folly, and pray to a God who cannot help. But we bend the knee and prostrate ourselves and bow down to the King of the Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He !”

The words about “ vanity and folly ” were alleged to be directed against the Christian religion, and by an anagram on the arithmetical value of the letters the Hebrew word for “ folly ” was even equated with the Hebrew name for Jesus. Thus the entire prayer “ became the cause of slanderous accusation and persecution, as a result of which it was in part mutilated through fear of the official censors ” (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, i., 337), and, as a fact, the “ vanity and folly ” is not reproduced in the modern Jewish Ashkenazic prayer-book. But “ *'Alenu* is a prayer probably pre-Christian in date ; and even if it be as late as Rab, who fixed its form, he did so in an environment where there were no Christians at all, and the clause had no more reference to Christianity in Rab’s mouth than in that of Isaiah from whom the words come (xxx. 7 ; xlv. 20) ” (I. Abrahams, *Annotated Edition of the Authorized Daily Prayer Book*, London, 1914, p. lxxxvii). Manasseh ben Israel, in his *Vindiciæ Judæorum*, devoted a whole section to this vindication. The fact that the *'Alenu* was sung by Jewish martyrs, in order to assuage the pangs of torture and execution, may have caused

their persecutors to seek ground for calumniating it. The twelfth of the "Eighteen Blessings" (see p. 75 above) was similarly alleged to be anti-Christian, instead of, as is plainly and historically the fact, anti-Jewish antinomians.

Note 5. Page 113.

Commercial Jealousy.

The diagnosis is important, and the passage is worth quoting in full. I take it from vol. i. of *A History of Greece*, by George Finlay, LL.D. New Edition (Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1877; pp. 267 ff.).

"When it happened that war or policy excluded the Greeks from participating in these transactions, they were generally conducted by the Jews. We find, indeed, after the fall of the Western Empire, that the Jews, availing themselves of their commercial knowledge and neutral political character, began to be very numerous in all the countries gained by conquest from the Romans, and particularly so in those situated in the Mediterranean, which maintained constant communications with the East. . . .

"About this period [roughly, 550] the Jewish nation attained a degree of importance which is worthy of attention, as explaining many circumstances connected with the history of the human race. The Jews either by natural multiplication or by proselytism appear to have increased very much in the age immediately preceding Justinian's reign [527-565]. This increase is to be accounted for by the decline of the rest of the population in the countries round the Mediterranean, and by the general decay of civilization, in consequence

of the severity of the Roman fiscal system, which trammelled every class of society with regulations restricting the industries of the people. These circumstances afforded an opening for the Jews, whose social position had been previously so bad that the decline of their neighbours at least afforded them some relative improvement. The Jews, too, at this period, were the only neutral nation who could carry on their trade equally with the Persians, Ethiopians, Arabs, and Goths; for, though they were hated everywhere, the universal dislike was a reason for tolerating a people never likely to form common cause with any other. In Gaul and Italy they had risen to considerable importance; and in Spain they carried on an extensive trade in slaves which excited the indignation of the Christian Church, and which kings and ecclesiastical councils vainly endeavoured to destroy. The Jews generally found support from the barbarian monarchs; and Theodoric the Great granted them every species of protection. Their alliance was often necessary to render the country independent of the wealth and commerce of the Greeks.

“To commercial jealousy, therefore, as well as religious zeal, we must attribute some of the persecutions which the Jews sustained in the Eastern Empire.”

Dr. Juster (*loc. cit.*, p. 119) and Dr. W. Cunningham (*An Essay on Western Civilization in its Economic Aspects: Ancient Times*. Cambridge, 1902; p. 203) rely on the authority of this passage.

Note 6. Page 147.

The Badge.

At the Fourth Lateran Council, held in Rome in November, 1215, Pope Innocent III., whose Pontificate, starting in 1198, was to close in 1216, initiated fresh restrictions on the narrow liberties and rights of Jews. The immediate cause of this severer policy did not lie in the perpetual reproach that the Jew was an unbeliever, and lay very little in the reproach that, having been confined to the single trade in money, he had developed in places oppressive methods of usury. The urgent cause is recognized today, and was probably present in Roman minds in 1215, as due to the recent *émeute* famous in history as the Albigensian Crusade. Albi, a town near Toulouse, had been the headquarters of a social and religious ferment in Languedoc and Provence, which had been stamped out with ruthless energy as a heresy against the Church. The nearness of these lovely districts in Southern France to the districts in Southern Spain where Maimonides (d. 1204) had lived, and where Jewish critics and scholars had plied the New Learning for a hundred and fifty years, had brought the French heretics and free-thinkers into close contact with Maimonists and their school; and a few years before the Lateran Council, the knightly and cultured prince, Raymond VI. of Toulouse, had been compelled, at the sword's point, among other conditions of defeat, to take oath to dismiss his Jewish officials and never again to take one into his employ. It is not our business to judge the Pope's policy. One historian, Professor T. F. Tout,

while giving the utmost credit to Innocent's zeal and administration, opines that, "in extending the benefits of a Crusade to Christians fighting against Christians, he handed on a precedent which was soon fatally abused by his successors. In crushing out the young national life of Southern France, the Papacy again set a people against itself" (*The Empire and the Papacy*, London, 1909). There we may leave this aspect of the matter. Our special interest is limited to the effect of the Pope's victory on the Jews, and we may confirm the opinion held by Jewish historians that the course and conduct of the Albigensian Crusade sharpened the determination of the Church to destroy the power of action in that people. Their modernist views and such influence as they might exert in undermining the Pope's authority were finally to be crushed, and the cruel, if logical, resolve was framed to sterilize Jewish influence for all time by separating Christians from Jewish contact.

We are concerned with only one item in this comprehensive papal programme. It imposed on all Jews and Jewesses, at all times and in all countries, the obligation to distinguish themselves from Christians by openly wearing a clearly recognizable badge. The shape, size and colour of the badge, which had to be bought by its bearers, was left to the discretion of local rulers. The common form was circular, like a wheel. In England in 1222 it was four inches long by two inches wide; originally white in colour, it was altered by Edward I. to yellow, and in 1275, fifteen years before the expulsion, the device was changed to "two tables" reminiscent of the tables of the Commandments.

Rulers exercised some elasticity in enforcing the decree. In Spain, Italy, and Southern France the rule was less strict, and was often relaxed for Jews on travel; hence, partly, the esteem in which the "Ashkenazim" held the "Sephardim": "the French or German Jew who wore his badge could still hold up his head when he thought of Cordova, Toledo, Barcelona, and Seville. Thus we do not find that the bearing of the badge produced its worst consequence until the beginning of the sixteenth century"—*i.e.*, after the expulsion from Spain in 1492 (I. Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, 305). The age for starting it was not uniform, but was commonly fixed locally at six or seven, in some places at thirteen—an odd concomitant of the *Bar-mitzvah*, or religious majority; and, since both sexes had to wear it, it is difficult to admit that the Pope's pretext for imposing it was the whole truth of the matter. Referring to Jews and Moslems, he represented it as a means of protecting Christian women from undesirable connection. Readers of Boccaccio and lewder authors may deem female chastity more in danger from the monks of the Church.

There is little to add to the recital, for which the most eminent authority is Ulysse Robert, *Les Signes d'Infamie au Moyen Age: Juifs, Sarrasins, hérétiques*, etc., 1891. But it is fair to consult Jewish writers for the effect of the badge on Jews. Dr. Abrahams (*op. cit.*) says that "the effects produced by this system of branding the Jews as a pariah class were as deplorable as they were inevitable." Dubnow denounces Innocent III. as the inventor of an ecclesiastical policy, "the object of which was to degrade the Jews to a pariah caste in Christian

society by a minute regimentation of all the circumstances of their life ;” and Graetz tells us that the Jews “ became more and more accustomed to their ignominious position, and lost all feeling of self-respect and esteem. They neglected their outward appearance. . . . They became more and more careless of their speech. . . . They lost all taste and sense of beauty, and to some extent became as despicable as their enemies desired.”

Note 7. Page 193.

“ *A Few Hebrew Scholars.*”

Much depends on the point of view. Further reference to Jewish experience of the Inquisition will be found in Ch. VI., § 3, but, meanwhile, Mr. Bell’s easy way with “ a few Hebrew scholars ” may remind us of what Claverhouse in *Old Mortality* said to Morton about Froissart. The passage is probably familiar :

“ ‘ Did you ever read Froissart ?’

“ ‘ No,’ was Morton’s answer.

“ ‘ I have half a mind,’ said Claverhouse, ‘ to contrive you should have six months’ imprisonment, in order to procure you that pleasure. His chapters inspire me with more enthusiasm than even poetry itself. And the noble canon, with what true chivalrous feeling he confines his beautiful expressions of sorrow to the death of the gallant and high-bred knight, of whom it was a pity to see the fall, such was his loyalty to his King, pure faith to his religion, hardihood towards his enemy, and fidelity to his lady-love ! Ah, *benedicite* ! how he will mourn over the fall of such a pearl of knighthood. . . . But, truly, for sweep-

ing from the face of the earth some few hundreds of villain churls, who are born but to plough it, the high-born and inquisitive historian has marvellous little sympathy.' ”

Note 8. Page 203.

Fledgeby and Riah.

These episodes in *Our Mutual Friend* are curiously typical of Jewish history in medieval England. Possibly Dickens, with his genius for sympathy, seized the atmosphere of the times after some protests had been addressed to him in connection with his delineation of Fagin. Riah, it will be recalled, was pushed by “Fascination Fledgeby” into the unenviable position of a screen for the money-lending business which Fledgeby conducted under the style of Riah, Pubsey and Co.; and Dickens tells us how, in the course of a day’s work,

“Riah proceeded up the stairs, and paused at Fascination Fledgeby’s door. Making free with neither bell nor knocker, he struck upon the door with the top of his staff, and, having listened, sat down on the threshold. It was characteristic of his habitual submission, that he sat down on the raw dark staircase, as many of his ancestors had probably sat down in dungeons, taking what befell him as it might befall.

“After a time, when he had grown so cold as to be fain to blow upon his fingers, he arose and knocked with his staff again, and listened again, and again sat down to wait. Thrice he repeated these actions before his listening ears were greeted by the voice of Fledgeby, calling from his bed, ‘Hold your row!—I’ll come and open the door directly!’ But, in lieu of coming directly, he fell into a sweet

sleep for some quarter of an hour more, during which added interval Riah sat upon the stairs and waited with perfect patience."

Here we have it all : the going up and down another's stair ; the Christian usurer with his Jewish screen ; the infinite patience of the Jew, taking what befell him as it might befall. And if Riah's part in this drama is obvious, if the Jews sat in outer darkness, awaiting permission to enter Parliament and other parlours, several authorities indicate in our text who was cast for the unenviable part of Fledgeby. "It had been the deliberate design of William the Conqueror," says Dr. W. Cunningham, "to organize his revenues on a monetary basis, and he induced some Jews to accompany him to England, as his scheme could not be carried through without the presence and assistance of moneyed men." We know from the historian of the King's revenues (Sir J. Ramsay) how the Conqueror's design miscarried ; how, in Fitz Neal's words, "the gracious King, in his munificence, though bound in the interest of the public weal to confiscate the vile usurer's ill-gotten gains," was generally prudent enough to accept a "composition" ; how Richard I. instituted the Exchequer of the Jews, as a branch of the Great Exchequer, "an office to shelter and tend them till the time for plucking should come" ; and how "behind the Jew stood the King." When the orange was squeezed dry, Edward I., partly at the instance of the pious Queen-Mother, reintroduced the authentic Fledgeby touch. "Old Riah," ran his employer's final letter, "your accounts being all squared, Go ! You are an ungrateful dog of a Jew ! Get out !"

They got out in 1290, and a special sum of £116,000 was collected as a kind of Entertainment Tax on the spectacle of their expulsion.

It is not pretended that every pre-Expulsion English Jew displayed the virtues of Riah. Patience he must have possessed. But there was a darker side to his character, and King Edward chose the psychological moment. Still, money-lending is not a healthy trade, least of all, perhaps, when its profits go into the pockets of others than the lenders. It was not of the Jews, but of their successors, the Cahorsines, that Matthew Paris wrote: "It is manifest that their loans lie not in the path of charity, but to gratify their own covetousness"; and the Cahorsines, unlike the Jews, did not start under a ban of religious hate. Therefore, though every Hebrew usurer was not as dovelike as Riah, albeit compelled to the same appearance of a hawk, we may read into the Riah-Fledgeby episodes a larger meaning than Dickens may have intended.

Note 9. Page 224.

An Ethical Ideal.

I had inserted in the text at this point some verses from Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior," but it seems inappropriate, on second thoughts, to confuse the argument by associating thoughts aroused by the death of Nelson with thoughts aroused by the history of Israel. Yet a link may be found in the poet's remark that his brother John, of whom he was also thinking, "greatly valued moral and religious instruction for the young"—a trait always characteristic of the Jews,

and Wordsworth's sense of Jewish values may be judged by the concluding stanza of his "Jewish Family" (1828):

"Mysterious safeguard that, in spite
Of poverty and wrong,
Doth here preserve a living light
From Hebrew fountains sprung;
That gives this ragged group to cast
Around the dell a gleam
Of Palestine, of glory past,
And proud Jerusalem."

Here is the same character as is delineated in the happy warrior,

"Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain,"

—not material, but moral;

"Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives;
By objects which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate; . . .
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness."

A lifelong Wordsworthian may be permitted this reference to his favourite poet.

Note 10. Page 226.

The Universal Sway.

I may be allowed to quote a paragraph from Achille Luchaire, *Innocent III.: Le Concile de Latran et la Réforme de l'Église*, Paris, 1908, p. 86:

“ Au total, que voyons-nous dans cette législation d’un concile œcuménique présidé et inspiré par Innocent III.? Le renouvellement d’un certain nombre de mesures édictées par ses prédécesseurs, des idées réformatrices qui lui appartiennent en propre, quelques mesures d’un libéralisme évident et qui constituent un progrès social, le désir très sincère de rendre l’Église pus éclairée, plus morale, plus digne de sa mission. Mais là encore apparaît cette tradition de catholicisme médiéval, qui a laissé sur le système religieux des temps postérieurs une impression difficile à effacer : l’affirmation énergique de la supériorité du clerc et du droit qui s’attribue l’Église de soumettre la laïque à sa domination et à ses lois.”

Note 11. Page 264.

The Rhine Communities

The quotation in the text is taken from *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages*, by Rabbi Louis Finkelstein, which is published, with a Foreword by Prof. Alexander Marx (joint-author, with Max L. Margolis, of a *History of the Jewish People*), by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1924. It contains texts and English translations of *Takkanoth*, or ordinances, promulgated in various countries, including Candia and Corfu, during the Christian Middle Ages, and these are preceded by a valuable general essay on the rabbinical synods. Documents of this kind form the material for the brilliant reconstruction of *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, by the late Israel Abrahams. “ The synods discussed in this volume had no authority,” we are reminded, “ other than that granted them voluntarily by the Jews of the various communities. None of

them was recognized by the secular Government, and only in Spain and Italy was there any relation at all between the rabbinical gatherings and the State. Nevertheless, it is felt that the term 'self-government' may properly be applied to the Jewish institutions of the Middle Ages, because, whether *de jure* or *de facto*, the communities were autonomous entities. The decrees of the synods were obeyed, often with far greater rigour than those of the State Government." It is obvious that this power of imposing a law of the inner life on a self-governing community would be treated as of grave importance by a conscientious leader, such as Gershom, for example; and our argument in the text is directed to show that Jewish leadership in these centuries and countries aimed as deliberately as it could, in circumstances materially adverse, at reviving in a dispossessed people the sense of inheritance and tradition.

Note 12. Page 283.

Jewish Rituals and their National Designations.

The simplest account of the distinction between the Spanish and Portuguese (Sephardic) and German and Polish (Ashkenazic) Jews, and its obliteration in practice throughout the various countries of their settlement, is given in the Introduction, dated August, 1841, to the first edition of the *Forms of Prayer used in the West London Synagogue of British Jews*, which was founded in that year. The first Senior Minister of that congregation was the late Prof. D. W. Marks, well known as a homiletic writer, and the second was the

Rev. Morris Joseph, whose *Judaism as Creed and Life* is still the best English text-book on its subject. The West London Synagogue is known as the Reform Congregation. Dr. C. G. Montefiore, a member of its Council, helped later to found the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, as a more advanced centre of progressive Judaism. Meanwhile, as long ago as 1841, the use of national terms to denote ritual differences was repudiated in this Introduction as follows :

“The differences which formerly existed between the Portuguese and German Jewish congregations, and which caused them to consider each other as half aliens in religious matters, have happily, by the progress of liberal sentiments, been removed, in as far as they obstructed that brotherly feeling which the unity of our religious system requires ; and the efforts of our newly established Congregation have been directed, we hope successfully, to the obliteration of every vestige of that useless and hurtful separation. We have discarded the names indicating a connection between us, natives of Great Britain professing the Jewish religion, and the countries from which our ancestors immigrated, and we have adopted for our place of worship the sufficiently explicit designation of ‘West London Synagogue of British Jews.’ In making this statement, it is expedient to notice that the term ‘British Jews’ has been chosen with a view to efface the distinction now existing between the German and Portuguese Jews, and not in any way to constitute a new distinction, in a religious point of view, between the Jews of Great Britain and those of any other country.”

*Note 13. Page 309.**Yiddish Literature.*

I shall be blamed in some quarters for relegating to a Note the Jewish contribution contained in the *corpus* of *Littérature Judéo-Allemande*, a history of which, by my friend, Dr. M. Pinès, of the University of Paris, with a Preface by Prof. Andler of the Sorbonne, was written in 1911 (Paris, 1911), after the earlier *History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, by Leo Wiener, of Harvard University (London, Nimmo, 1899). But without expressing an opinion, which is not necessary here, on the final value of this literature, I may defend my treatment of it by referring to the object of the present essay. I am trying to extract and to display the contribution which Jews have made to the civilization of the Christian era, and, since that society has been developed without acquaintance with the Yiddish writers, I have deemed it supererogatory to introduce them in the text of my book. I may add, without fear of contradiction, that, in happier circumstances of equality, those writers would have chosen their respective national vernaculars. This is not equivalent to saying that books written in Judæo-German are *ex hypothesi* of no literary merit, or that a Yiddish poet, novelist or fabulist is *ex hypothesi* not a man of letters. But that contention, however illogical, has definite pragmatic force. Yiddish was born in the German ghettos, and Dr. Pinès admits that, if it had not overflowed the German territorial frontier, it would probably have declined to the level of a jargon, or an argot of the ghetto. But it happened that German Jews trekked

in considerable numbers into Bohemia, Poland, and Lithuania, and that they were protected by the kings of Poland as the nucleus of a third Estate of the Realm—a middle class in the abyss between the nobles and the peasants. They mixed very little with either class. They acquired self-governing institutions, and they had no inducement to modify the language which they had brought with them from the ghettos, and which still served as a link with the relatives and friends whom they had left behind. That language, in the course of two centuries, and on the lips of several millions of speakers, did undoubtedly acquire a distinct form and idiomatic characteristics; and, after the massacres of 1648-58, it was brought again by Polish refugees to the German territories of its origin, enriched by use and wont and by a considerable body of writings. Thus it passed into the heritage of the nineteenth century as the *lingua franca* of continental Jews, and “in its popular form,” Wiener assures us, it “is certainly not inferior to many of the literary languages,” recognized in philology and in letters. But he describes it as a sealed book, doomed to extinction in America, and likely to last in Europe only “as long as there are any disabilities for the Jews.” I am not familiar with Yiddish, though I have enjoyed English versions of some of the poems of I. L. Peretz, who was born in 1851, Morris Rosenfeld (1862), and others. But with the utmost wish to be fair and even generous in criticism, I have not formed the opinion that there is reflected in the genius of Peretz “the subtleness of the Talmud, the wisdom of the ancients, the sparkle of Heine, the transcendency of Shelley, the mysticism of Hauptmann”; or that Rosenfeld’s *Songs*

from the Ghetto, admirable and moving as they are, have absorbed what is best in "Heine, Schiller, Moore and Shelley." I quote these opinions from better-qualified critics, but am satisfied that no serious wrong to comparative literature is committed by the neglect of Yiddish.

INDEX

- AARON OF LINCOLN, 201 f.
 Abba Areka, 85 ff.
 Abdurrahman III., 146
 Abrabanel, 366 f.
 Abrahams, Dr. I., 144, 218,
 314, 399, 415
 Abulafia, R., 274
 Acton, Lord, 358
 Ælia Capitolina, 80
 Agriculture, 114
 Akiba, 70, 80, 270
 Albertus Magnus, 172
 Albigensian Crusade, 413
 Alemanno, Jochanan, 260
 'Alenu, 87, 409 f.
 Alexandria, 41
 Alexis, 313
 'Am ha-Aretz, 32 n.
 Amidah, 75
 Amoraim, 17, 86
 Anan, 130
 "Annus Mirabilis," 279
 Antoninus Pius, 102
 Apion, 40
 Aquinas, 172
 Aristotle, 170 ff.
 Arnold, Matthew, 104; and
 Maimonides, 210
 Ashi, 107
 Ashkenazim, 218, 280 ff., 307
 Ashley, Sir W., 203, 379
 Authorized Version, 261
 Autos-da-fé, 239; and Spinoza,
 361 f.
 Averroes, 176 f.; and Maimon-
 ides, 201
 Avicebron, 133, 179 ff.
 Avicenna, 176 f.
 Azariah dei Rossi, 368
 Azriel, R., 274
 Baal Shem Tob (Besht), 328
 Babylonia, 69, 129
 Bacon, F., 124
 Bacon, R., 172
 Badge, 147, 413 ff.
 Balfour, Earl of, 394
 Bar Chanina, 109
 Bar Cochba, 80
 Bar Mitzvah, 91
 Bate, Henri, 227
 Beard, C., 136, 354
 Bell, Mr. A. F. G., 192, 196
 Belloc, Mr. H., 136
 Benedict XIV., Pope, 326
 Benjamin of Tudela, 164
 Bentwich, Mr. Norman, 45
 Beth-ther, 80
 Blake, W., 269
 Boccaccio, 415
 Bodin, Jean, 223
 Boehme, Jacob, 266
 Börne, L., 380
 Boissonnade, Prof. P., 142
 Box, Canon, 254
 Bragg, Sir W., 125
 Bridges, Dr., 330
 Browning, Robert, 227
 Bruno, Giordano, 187
 Buckle, 361
 Burton, Sir R., 377
 Byron, 163, 275
 Cabala, 254 ff.
 Calendar, 71 f.
 Caligula, 40
 Cambridge Platonists, 277
 Capistrano, 305
 Carlyle, 229
 Cervantes, 22
 Charlemagne, 128
 Charles IV., Emperor, 370
 Chassidism, *see* Hassidism
 Chazars, 150, 188
 Chesterton, Mr. G. K., 96
 Cicero, 24 f.

- Circumcision, 28, 81
 Claudius, 40
 Clement VI., Pope, 285
 Clement XIV., Pope, 326
 Cohen, Levi B., 398
 Coleridge, S. T., 277, 336
 Colerus, 331
 Colet, Dean, 255
 Columbus, 163, 373
 Commercial jealousy, 113, 411 f.
 Corti, Count, 377 n., 378 n.
 Cossacks, 313
 Cracow, 305
 Cromwell, 297 f.
 Cross and Crescent in Spain, 148
 Crusades, 165, 215, 304
 Cudworth, Ralph, 266 [418
 Cunningham, Dr. W., 204, 320,
 Da Costa, Uriel, 241 ff.
 Daniel, 66 f.
 Dante, 162; and Aristotle, 176;
 Jewish contacts, 177; and
 Cabala, 258
 Dark Ages, 95, 100 f.
 Da Silva, Samuel, 244
 Davids, A. L., 318
 De Castro Tartas, Isaac, 236
 Del Campo, Elvira, 232 f.
 De Leon, Moses, 274
 Delmedigo, Elias, 260
 De Medina, Sir S., 398
 Deuteronomy (vi. 4-5), 50;
 (xv. 1-11), 59; (xxii. 12, and
 vi. 8-9), 123
 Diaspora, 24, 114; and Rome, 27
 Dickens, Charles, 203, 417
 Dion Cassius, 24
 Dohm, C., 389
Domus Conversorum, 221
 Dryden, 279
 Du Bartas, 182
 Dubnow, Dr. S. M., 234, 310,
 387, 408
 Ecclesiastes, 114
 Eclogue IV., 20 f.
 Egica, King, 96
 Ehrlich, 318
 "Eighteen Blessings," 74; and
 Jerome, 108
 Einstein, 318, 334
 Eisenmenger, J. A., 376
 Eleazar, R., 94
 Emancipation, 365, 385 f.
 England, 203, 220 ff., 296, 301
En Soph, 255
 Erasmus, 353, 373
 Erwig, King, 96
 Essenes, 32 n., 268
 Europeanism, Jewish, 174; and
 the Cabala, 257; in seven-
 teenth century, 294; in eigh-
 teenth century, 363, 398; and
 Rothschild family, 378
 Eusebius, 16
 Exodus (xxx. 12-15), 403
 Ezekiel, 34, 269
 Ezra, 33; and Hillel, 56
 Fettmilch, Vincent, 375
 Feuchtwanger, L., 247 n.
 Feudalism, 141 f.
 Ficino, 45
 Fifth Monarchy, 295, 298 f.
 Finkelstein, L., 217, 282, 421
 Finlay, G., 113, 411
 Fisher, Bishop, 255
 Fitzmaurice-Kelly, J., 191
 Flaccus, 24, 403 f.
 Flagellants, 370
 Fludd, Robert, 266
 France and Judæa, 31
 Frankel, Z., 391
 Frankfort-on-Main, 369 ff.
 Freud, 318
 Friedländer, M., 208
 Gabirol, Solomon ibn, 158 ff.
 Galen, 176
 Galileo, and Milton, 180
 Gamaliel, 70
 Ganganelli, Cardinal, 326
Gaon (pl. *Geonim*), 129

- Geiger, A., 391
Gemara, 16
 Gemistos, 160, 257
 Genesis (x. 3), 145 n.
 Gershon, R., 157, 286 f., 321
 Ghetto, at Frankfurt, 373
 Ghetto-bend, 314
 Gibbon, 102, 112
 Gideon, S., 398
 Goethe, 269, 343
 Gogol, 273
 Graetz, 148, 391
 Greeks and Jews, 117
 Green, J. R., 224
 Gregory, Pope, 118
 Grosseteste, Robert, 172
Guide for the Perplexed, 208 ff.
 Gutzkow, Karl, 242
- Hadrian, 79
 Hakim II., 146
Halachah, 37; in the making, 52
 Halevi, Jehudah, 187 ff.; and
 Luis Ponce de Leon, 200
 Haroun al-Raschid, 128
 Hartog, N., 319
 Hasdai ibn Shaprut, 146 ff.
Haskalah, 391
 Hassall, A., 324 n.
 Hassidism, 322 ff.
 Hayyim, 227, 264
 Hebraism, 261
 Hebrew University, Jerusalem,
 183, 294
Hechaloth, 258
 Heine, 189, 381 f.
 Hellenism, 44, 132, 162, 260
 Heller, R., 314
 Henle, Jacob, 317
 Heraclius, 110
 Herford, Mr. R. T., 166, 405
 Hertz, F., 405
 Hertz, Dr. J. H., Chief Rabbi,
 268, 276
 Herzl, Theodor, 278, 321 n.,
 393; and Sabbatai Zevi, 397
- Hillel, 17, 56 ff., 94; and
 Jerome, 108.
 Homen, Antonio, 236
 Homer, 175
 Honorius IV., Pope, 204
 Horodezky, Dr. S. A., 268,
 329 n.
 Humanism, 153
 Humility, 48
- Ibn Ezra, Abraham, 226 f.
 Ibn Janach, 155
 Ibn Shaprut, *see* Hasdai
 Innocent III., Pope, 147, 421
 Inquisition, 146, 194, 231 f.
 Isaac, 128 [393
 Isaiah, and Virgil, 30; ch. vi.,
 Islam and Judaism, 110 f.
 Isserles, Moses, 309
- Jabne, 68
 Jehuda, Rabbi, 85 ff.
 Jeremiah, 87, 114
 Jerome, 106 ff.; on Wailing
 Wall, 409
 Jerusalem, 64; comfort of, 84 ff.;
 and Messianism, 111; and
 Halevi, 189; last phase, 393
 Jesus, 11; rejection of, 12; and
 Josephus, 15; and Philo, 41;
 and Pharisaism, 47 ff.
 Jewish War, 17, 39
 Jochanan ben Zakkai, 68
 Jonah Marinus, 158
 Jonathan, R., 94
 Josephus, 14; on Jesus, 14; and
 Rome, 39; on the Pharisees,
 60 f.; on the land, 114
 Jost, M., 391
 Judah ibn Tibbon, 155
Judenstaat, 393
 Juster, Dr. J., 83, 119, 406
- Kant, 397
 Karaites, 130 ff.
 Karo, Joseph, 290
 Keith, Sir A., 406

- Keter Malchut*, 180 f.
 Kimhi, David, 261
 King's chattel, 143
Kitab al-Khazari, 188
 Krochmal, N., 391
 Latini, Brunetto, 177
 Lea, Dr. H. C., 231
 Lecky, 311
 Leo Hebræus, 367
 Leo IV., Emperor, 151
 Leo X., Pope, 261
 Lessing, 389
Letters of Obscure Men, 293
 Levita, Elias, 262
 Leviticus (xix. 18), 50
 Liberty, as true aim of government, 357 [73 ff.
 Liturgy, Gamaliel's reforms,
 Livingstone, Dr. R. W., 102
 Loans, Jacob, 260
 Lopes, Dr. Roderick, 220
 Luchaire, Achille, 420
 Luke (xii. 38-40), 35; (xviii. 9-14), 47 ff.; (x. 25-28), 50 f.
 Luria, Isaac, 276
 Luzzatto, 368
 Lyall, Sir Alfred, 298
 Macaulay, 323
 Machiavelli, 355 f.
 Magnus, Lady, 384 n.
 Maimon, Solomon, 160
 Maimonides, 123, 201 ff.; and Spinoza, 348 f.
 Malachi, 392
 Mallet, Sir C., 171 [300
 Manassch ben Israel, 238, 295,
 Marcus Aurelius, 102 ff.
 Mark (ii. 28), 36; (xii. 28-34), 50 f.
 Marks, D. W., 422
 Marranos and Marranism, 229 ff.
 Martial, 28
 Marvell, A., 269
Masoreth ha-Masoreth, 262
 Matthew (xxiii.), 36; (xxii. 34-40), 50 f.
 Meir, of Rothenburg, 319
 Melchett, Lord, 316
 Mendelssohn, Moses, 90, 382 ff.; and Herzl, 393; and Philo,
 Mendes, Alvaro, 220 [399
 Meredith, George, 277
 Messianism, 66; and Cabalism, 257, 273; future of, 397
 Milton, John, 179 f., 347
Mishna, 16, 86; and Jerome, 108
Mitzvoth, 36
 Modena, Leon, 244
 Mohammed, 109 ff.
 Money-lenders, 346, 418 f.
 Montefiore, Dr. C. G., 53, 92, 423; Sir Moses, 398
 Moors in Spain, recession of, 147
Moreh Nebuchim, 206
 Münster, Sebastian, 263
 Munk, S., 179, 208
 Myers, Mr. J. M., 234
 Mysticism, 258 f.; Jewish, 267 ff.
 Nachmanides, 274
 Nasi, Joseph, 307
 Nationality, 406 f.
 Nehardea, 107
 Nehemiah, 33; his covenant, 35, 68; contribution to the Temple, 403
 Neo-Platonism, 46
 Nerva, Emperor, 404
 Nordenskiöld, E., 318, 342
 Novalis, 390
 Obadiah, 145 n.
 Oman, Sir Charles, 76, 95
Opferpfennig, 370
 Oppenheimer, Süß, 247
 Oral law, 52, 77
 Otto I., Emperor, 151
 Paris, Matthew, 419
 Pater, W., 103
 Peretz, I. L., 425

- Petrarch, 42, 173
 Pfefferkorn, Johann, 293, 374
 Pharisees, 32, 38; and Jesus, 47 ff.; their psychology, 63 f.
 Philo, 17, 39 ff.; and Jesus, 41; and Mendelssohn, 399
 Phocas, King, 95
 Pico della Mirandola, 45, 260
Piedra pretiosa, 295
 Pietism, 268
Pilpul, 317
 Pinès, Dr. M., 424
Pirke Aboth, 56 f., 121
 Placelessness, 140 ff.
 Plato, 183, 284
 Pletho, 259
 Plotinus, 269, 277
 Polak, Jacob, 317
 Poland, 250, 304 ff., 425
 Pollock, Sir F., 212, 333 n.
 Ponce de Leon, Luis, 192 ff.
 Pontius Pilate, 30
 Progressive Judaism, 396, 423
 Proverbs (xii. 11), 114; (viii. 7), 178; (xxx. 18), 298
 Prussia, 324
 Prynne, W., 300
 Psalms (cxix. 63, 53); (cxix. 45), 78; (xxx. 15), 105; (cxviii. 6), 276
 Puibusque, A. L. de, 185
 Pumbeditha, 107

 Rabbinism in Poland, 310
 Race, 404 f. [418
 Ramsay, Sir J. H., of Banff, 202,
 Rapoport, J. L., 391
 Rashi, 287 f.
 Rathenau, W., 70
 Rationalism, modern, 345
 Reccared, King, 95
 Reformation, 136 ff.
 Reinach, Dr. Th., 17
 Remak, R., 318
 Rembrandt, 295
Resh-Gelutha, 129

 Reubeni, David, 368
 Reuchlin, J., 152, 161; *de Arte Cabalistica*, 255; *de Verbo mirifico*, 260
 Revolutionary leaven, 138, 337
 Rhine communities, 264 f., 281,
 Rich, Edmund, 172 [421 f.
 Ritual-murder charge, 326
 Rituals, 422 f.
 Robert, Ulysse, 415
 Robinson, Rev. Prof. T. H., 387
 Romantic Movement, 363, 385; and Judaism, 390
 Rome, and Judæa, 18 ff.; pagan and Christian, 83
 Rosenfeld, M., 425
 Roth, Dr. L., 333 n., 345
 Rothschild, house of, 377 f.; Mayer Amschel, 385; Nathan Mayer, 398
 Royal Family, prayer for, 144

 Saadiah, 127 ff.
 Sabbatai Zevi, 252, 278, 303
 Sabbatical year, 59
 Sadducees, 32
 Saintsbury, Prof., 366, 384
 Salaman, Nina (Mrs. R. N.), 189, 197 f.
 Samuel Jarchinai, 85
 Schiller, 248 [J. A., 388
 Schlegel, F., 385; A. W. and Schnorrrer, 325
 Schürer, Prof., 408
 Scott, Sir Walter, 193, 416
 "Second Days," 73
Sefer Yetzirah, 272
 Segal, Mr. M. H., 383, 391 n.
 Selek, J., 326
 Seneca, 23
Sephira (pl. *Sephiroth*), 255
 Seventeenth century, 339 f.
 Sforzo, Obadiah, 260
 Shachna, S., 310, 317
 Shakespeare, 355
 Shammai, 57 f.

- Shool*, 91
Shulchan Aruch, 289
 Shylock, 116; and Joabin, 124, 222, 284
 Sigismund Augustus, King, 308
 Simeon, R., 94
 Simon, Mr. M., 133 n.
 Simon the Just, 57
 Singer, Dr. C., 173; on Jewish race, 404 f.
 Sisibut, King, 96
 Slavery, 114 f.
 Snell, Mr. F. J., 185
 Song of Songs, 270
 Spain, and Judæa, 31; under Philip III., 361
 Spanish literature, 196
 Spinoza, 330 ff.; and Maimonides, 348; and Machiavellism, 356; and Romantic Movement, 363
 Stewart, Prof. J. A., 186
 Suetonius, 404
 Sura, 107, 129
 Tacitus, 23, 84
Takkanoth, 421 [288
 Talmud, 16, 69, 88 f., 100, 107, "Tam," 289
Tannaim, 16, 86
 Tarphon, R., 94
 Tennyson, 344
 Theatre-going, 54
 Thompson, Prof. D'A., 172
 Thucydides, 60, 99
 Tibbon, Samuel ibn, 206 f.
 Toland, John, 386 f.
 Toledo, Council of, 96
Torah, 33, 88 ff., 112, 267
 Torquemada, 235
 Tosaphists, 289
 Tout, Prof. T. F., 413 [335 ff.
Traſtatus Theologico-Politicus, Traini, Francesco, 177
 Trajan, 79
 Treitschke, 367, 381
 Trevelyan, Prof. G. M., 298
 Trithemius, 262
 Utrecht, Peace of, 322 f.
 Valerius Maximus, 24
 Valla, Lorenzo, 159, 210
 Vaughan, 269
 Vecinho, J., 172
 Vespasian, 17; and sacred silver, 404
Vindiciæ Judæorum, 238, 300
 Virgil, 20; on Imperialism, 26
 Vossius, 295
 Waad, Polish, 315
 Wailing Wall, 408
 Wamba, King, 96
 Wandering Jew, 292
 Weiss, A., 208
 Wenzel, King, 372
 Westphalia, Treaty of, 313, 351
 Wiener, Leo, 424
 William the Conqueror, 202 f.
Wissenschaft des Judentums, 391
 Wolf, Dr. A., 168, 333 n.
 Wolf, Lucien, 220
 Wordsworth, 269, 280, 419 f.
Yekum porkan, 271
 Yiddish literature, 309, 424 f.
 Zacuto, A., 172
 Zangwill, I., 92 n., 162, 182, 278, 321, 335
 Zealots, 32
 Zevi, *see* Sabbatai
 Zionism, 65, 126, 257, 315, 393 f.
Zohar, 258 ff., 274 ff.
 Zunz, Leopold, 391

